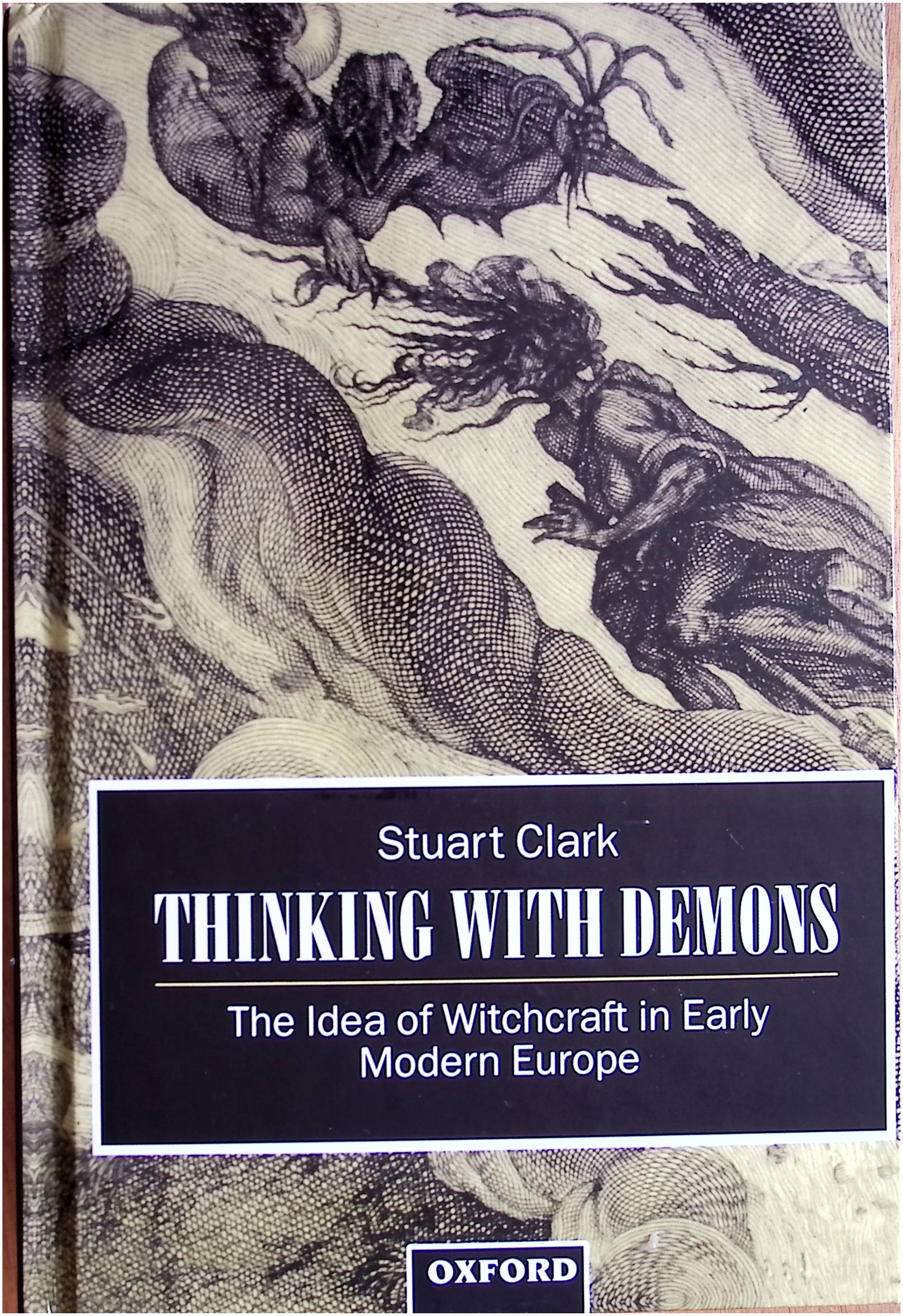

Stuart Clark

THINKING WITH DEMONS

The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe

OXFORD

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Stuart Clark

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New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto
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Published in the United States
by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

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ISBN 0-19-820001-3

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Printed and bound by CPI Antony Rowe Eastbourne

PREFACE

THIS book began as an attempt to fill a gap in historical treatments of witchcraft in early modern Europe. By the early 1980s modern studies of most aspects of the subject were fast appearing but no sustained attempt had yet been made to reconsider the views of the many intellectuals—clergymen, theologians, lawyers, physicians, natural philosophers, and the like—who published books about it at the time. Many of these so-called demonologists advocated the prosecution of witches and could plausibly be said to have influenced the trials that took place. But except for a few well-known texts, read largely in isolation, their voluminous writings were neglected by historians, who preferred to focus on the social and institutional configurations of 'witch-hunting', together with the patterns of prosecution in the various European regions and the local circumstances that produced them. If anything, there was a reaction against studying the intellectual history of these episodes, reflecting an annoyance with the way earlier generations of scholars, especially in Germany around the turn of this century and in America thereafter, had done little else—and done it in a confessional and wholly rationalistic spirit. I had no wish to revive this tradition or reclaim some kind of priority for demonology. I simply wanted to re-insert the beliefs of early modern intellectuals into the history of witchcraft as one, but only one, of its necessary ingredients. The best way to do this seemed to be to read all the published texts in question, beginning in the fifteenth century when the learned debate about witchcraft really began and ending in the early eighteenth century when it finally lost momentum.

Over a dozen years later, I am still confident that demonology ought to have something to offer those seeking to explain the witch trials. But the connection cannot any longer be seen as straightforward and it is not one that I explore in any direct way. Some of the things I trace in the pages of books—apocalyptic expectations, evangelical campaigns, and political roles, for example—no doubt bear witness to the more general cultural conditions that made witchcraft seem a real and pressing danger and its eradication a desirable action. But several important studies—notably Robin Briggs's *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft*—have now confirmed that most witchcraft accusations and prosecutions were initiated in ways that precluded the immediate impact of intellectuals, even if the subsequent proceedings could be affected by consultations with academic jurists and theologians. It is simply not the case that witchcraft theory caused 'witch hunts' or that its incidence influenced theirs; indeed, the reverse is much more likely to have been true. In offering this survey of beliefs I am, therefore, under no illusions about their possible lack of correlation with events (as usually understood; the enunciation of a belief is, of course, an event, while events are unintelligible without reference to beliefs). This possibility might be worth investigating further, if only to underline the theory-bound nature of demonology and the textual constraints on its authors.

But I prefer not to think in terms of such correlations at all, hoping thereby to break the dominance that the study of witchcraft prosecutions has had for so long over the interpretation of witchcraft texts. If it is unwise to treat demonology as a key to the history of the trials, it is also a distortion to make it simply their reflection. What I have attempted, then, is only an account of what writers on witchcraft said about the subject and the (largely) intellectual reasons they had for saying it. For this purpose I have thought it best to assume the self-referential character of their texts.

Witchcraft theory was not, however, written in isolation and ought not to be read in that way. Another of the features of research that it seemed worth while to challenge was the tendency to regard the topic as somehow peculiar and historically unassimilable. I made the further assumption, therefore, that a body of ideas that survived for nearly 300 years must have made some kind of sense and that this probably lay in its coherence with ideas about other things. I was influenced, in particular, by a remark of Alasdair MacIntyre's (also put to use by Robert Bartlett in his book on medieval ordeals): 'To say that a belief is rational is to talk about how it stands in relation to other beliefs.'[1] It soon became apparent that demonology was a case in point, and that witchcraft beliefs at this level were sustained by a whole range of other intellectual commitments. This is because the theoretical arguments clustered around particular issues: whether it was possible or not for witchcraft to happen as a real phenomenon in the natural world, why it was afflicting Europe at a particular time, what kinds of sins it involved and how clergymen should counteract them, and why rulers and magistrates should act to rid the world of the threat. In effect, demonology was a composite subject consisting of discussions about the workings of nature, the processes of history, the maintenance of religious purity, and the nature of political authority and order. Inevitably, its authors took up particular intellectual positions in relation to these four major topics of early modern thought. Quite simply, their views about witchcraft depended on concepts and arguments drawn from the scientific, historical, religious, and political debates of their time. Equally, by theorizing about witches, they made important contributions to these same debates; the relationships I shall be exploring were very much complementary ones. In many cases, indeed, the subject of witchcraft seems to have been used as a means for thinking through problems that originated elsewhere and that had little or nothing to do with the legal prosecution of witches; hence my adoption of the somewhat Lévi-Straussian title *Thinking with Demons* to convey this sense of demonology as an intellectual resource.

So seamlessly does demonology merge with these other debates—so much do they cease to *be* other debates—that I would like to propose, not the death of the author, but the dissolution of the 'demonologist'. Although I started out by adopting this traditional label, I was soon forced to recognize that it had misleading implications. I rapidly discovered that there was too much demonology embedded in early modern books—books of all kinds and on many subjects—for it to be attributed to one kind of writer. More seriously, the inference seemed to be that those who wrote about witchcraft were somehow interested in it to the exclusion of anything else; this was their speciality, and an aberrant one at that. But for the vast majority it was not. They had many of the other typical—one might even say ordinary—intellectual interests and affiliations of their age. They were primarily theologians, jurists, philosophers, or whatever, who, in the course of some intellectual or moral project, felt it necessary to turn to the subject to see how it related to their wider concerns. If we go on calling them 'demonologists', we run the risk of setting them apart from these more general pursuits—indeed, from precisely the things that help us understand why they were interested in witchcraft at all and how they could believe in its reality. Of course, as a subject, 'demonology' too was not just concerned with witchcraft; it embraced discussions of magic, of superstition, and, not unnaturally, of demons themselves. But a label that allows for thematic interrelationships does not seem to me to create the same difficulties as a label that hides them.

---

[1] Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Rationality and the Explanation of Action', in id., *Against the Self-Images of the Age* (London, 1971), 250.

What follows, then, is not a book about 'witch-hunting'—although it might be said to be about witch-hating—nor one about 'demonologists'. It is a book about demonology, certainly, but set in a series of contexts drawn from early modern intellectual life as a whole. I have taken seriously the suggestion that the best places to gain historical access to a strange culture are those where its meanings seem most opaque. Such meanings may be intrinsically significant but concentrating on them serves a more ambitious historical purpose. The witchcraft beliefs of early modern intellectuals seem to be in this category. My aim, therefore, is to make them more intelligible in themselves but, in doing this, to shed light on the larger intellectual histories to which they belonged. If this interests the historians of such histories, as well as those working on witchcraft matters in particular, the aim will have been achieved.

I have divided most of the book between the four subject-categories already mentioned: Science, History, Religion, Politics. Each of these sections looks at broadly the same body of demonological texts from a particular idiomatic perspective, although different texts (and different aspects of the same text) achieve prominence at different moments. The four sequences of chapters are each introduced by a preliminary discussion of the issues to be raised, after which they move between analysis of discussions within demonology, surveys of the more general debates that animated European intellectuals in the subject-area in question, and attempts to relate the two. What I have tried to show, in particular, is that the belief in witchcraft was congruent with particular kinds of scientific, historical, religious, and political views and, by implication at least, incongruent with others. Of course, to carve up thought into categories in this way is, if not entirely arbitrary, at least artificial, but this seemed the best way of dealing with a very large number of texts over a very long span of time. The reader will easily detect the overlapping and mutually reinforcing elements that linked the four 'modes' of thinking that I have distinguished.

The book starts with a further sequence of chapters, also with its own introduction, where the focus is not only on the substance of witchcraft theory but on its form;

to be precise, on both simultaneously. Here, I concentrate on the way the logical and rhetorical choices made by witchcraft authors were themselves constitutive of what they discussed, a well as being typical, again, of those made elsewhere in early modern writing. These are features of demonology best conveyed by the title 'Language'. In bare essence, my argument at this point is much the same as that sketched in a *Past and Present* essay of 1980, which one or two people at the time kindly suggested I should develop. I feel a little uneasy about drawing on it again, but, in compensation, I have greatly amplified its scope, extended it to cover the gendering of witchcraft, and made it flexible enough to deal with the instabilities as well as the stabilities internal to demonology. The result, I hope, is a degree of subtlety that evaded me in the original essay.

The reader will not be amused by the idea that this book could have been even longer than it is. The fact remains that, although the four chosen subject-categories seem to be the most important ones, others might have been added—in particular, that of law and jurisprudence (how witches should be legally apprehended, examined, and punished). I also regret not spending more time on individual authors and individual texts, instead of so often submerging them in general descriptions. It is probably true, in addition, that my approach is too 'internalist', concentrating on patterns of thought at the expense of the interests they served and the concrete situations that influenced their expression. Let me say at the outset, therefore, what it would be tedious to repeat throughout: that this is a study of notions of demonic deviance held by those who, in one way or another, were anxious to preserve orthodoxy, and who constructed the difference between the normal world and the world of witchcraft in such a way as to legitimize the institutions to which they belonged or otherwise supported. Most serious of all, I have paid relatively little attention to either the genesis or the decline of the ideas whose character I describe. My reading could (and perhaps should) have been extended back into medieval scholarship and forward into eighteenth-century modernism. Not to do this was, however, a deliberate policy (defended in a short 'Postscript' to the book), designed to give prominence to demonology as a working system of belief at the height of its powers to persuade, rather than to those responsible (in some moralistic sense) for either its creation or its overthrow.

To write as I have done about the rationality and cogency of texts previously condemned for barbarism and inhumanity may invite the charge of excusing the inexcusable. I have certainly tried to rescue demonology from the rationalistic opprobrium once directed at it, but only in the interests of historical symmetry; that is to say, the paying of equal attention to past beliefs that we ourselves would reject and to those we might accept. I do not think it worth while to adopt any particular moral stance with regard to the beliefs and behaviour of people living in historically remote societies with standards quite unlike our own, preferring to conserve my moral energies for issues closer to home. If some general lesson is to be gleaned from what follows, it is only that the purportedly most essential, objective, and timeless truths have nothing to commend them but the descriptions of those who happen to call them true.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Like all large books this one has accumulated large debts. Not the least is to those many scholars I have cited in my footnotes. I could not have tried to embrace so many topics over such a spread of time, or attempted so many broad characterizations, without relying heavily on the researches of others. My bibliography of modern references is a very long one but it reflects the indispensable assistance I have had in this respect. I have also gained much from being invited to read papers to seminars and conferences in Britain and abroad, as well as from the large gatherings of witchcraft and magic researchers in Stockholm (1984), Wolfenbüttel (1987), Budapest (1988), Exeter (1991), Paris (1992), and Princeton (1995). Contacts with members of both the Dutch study group for 'Witchcraft and Sorcery in the Netherlands' and the Arbeitskreis Interdisziplinäre Hexenforschung organized from the Academy of the diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart and the University of Tübingen have led to invaluable exchanges of information and ideas. I am grateful, in particular, to the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton for receiving me as a member of the School of Historical Studies during 1988–9. Both the Nuffield Foundation and the University of Wales, Swansea, made that visit possible, the one by awarding me a Social Science Research Fellowship, and the other by allowing me leave of absence. Other grants of financial assistance have come from the British Academy, the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris, the Wolfson Foundation, the Olin Foundation in Stockholm, and the Research Fund of the University of Wales, Swansea.

Some of my immediate colleagues, notably Hugh Dunthorne, were kind enough to teach courses for me in my absence, while others helped to sort out translation problems. Two, at least, have had an important influence on my work—Sydney Anglo, who will not approve of some of the things I have said but bears the responsibility for introducing me to my subject and guiding my early efforts, and Bruce Haddock, whose astonishing knowledge of both the history of ideas and historical theory I benefited from on many occasions, and whose writing has always been a model to me. Peter Elmer has been a constant and generous source of references and ideas, drawn from his immensely exciting work on witchcraft in England. I naturally owe a great deal to those who, like him, were kind enough to read and comment on various drafts of chapters or sections: Florike Egmond, John Elliott, Sarah Ferber, Antonio Feros, Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, Julian Goodare, Bruce Haddock, Machteld Löwensteyn, Lloyd Moote, Lyndal Roper, Al Soman, John Spurr, John Turner, and Brian Vickers. For help with the typing and processing of my manuscript I am grateful to Glennis Jones, June Morgan, and Sarah Williams. In Princeton I learned much from the other members and staff of the IAS and the history department at the university, notably Susan Amussen, Natalie Davis, Greg Dening, John Elliott, Clifford Geertz, Lynn Hunt, Miri Rubin, Joan Scott, and David Underdown. Here in Britain, it has been especially enlightening over the years to talk about witchcraft

matters to Jonathan Barry, Robin Briggs, Michael Hunter, and Lyndal Roper. The personal encouragement of Quentin Skinner has been of particular significance to me, and Keith Thomas, who initially encouraged me to write the book and who read the whole of it in draft, has likewise been a great support and inspiration. I thank all these people, and others who have helped in any way, for showing interest in the making of this book, as well as for being invariably tactful when asking when it would be finished. In this respect, I could not have asked for a more enthusiastic or more forbearing publisher than Tony Morris. My own family has suffered the usual consequences of prolonged academic authorship, and I reserve my warmest appreciation for their understanding and patience.

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NOTES ON BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

ALMOST without exception the sources for this book are themselves printed books. The indispensable bibliographical guide to those concerned directly with demonology is *Witchcraft: Catalogue of the Witchcraft Collection in Cornell University Library,* intro. R. H. Robbins, cd. Martha J. Crowe (Millwood, NY, 1977). Three older bibliographies on which I also draw are: Eberhard David Hauber, *Bibliotheca, acta etscripta inagica* (3 vols.; Lemgo, 1738-45); Johann GeorgTheodor Grasse, *Bibliotheca magica et pneumatica* (Leipzig, 1843); and Robert ^e-Plhssis. *Essai d'une bibliographic franfaise methodique et raisonnee de la sorcellerie et de la possession demoniaque* (Paris, 1900). Additional items for France and Germany respectively can be found in the list of'Sources imprimees' in Robert Mandrou, *Magistrats et sorciers en France au XVIT siecle* (Paris, 1968), 24-70, and in the bibliography compiled by Anneliese Staff of the holdings of witchcraft literature in the Herzog August Bibliothek at Wolfenbiittel published in Hartmut Lehmann and Otto Ulbricht (eds.), *Vom Unfug des Hexen-Processes: Gegner der Hexenverfolgung von Johann Weyer bis Friedrich Spee* (Wiesbaden, 1992), 341-91. For Part II, I found many references in Lynn Thorndike's *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (8 vols.; New York, 1923-58), and for general biographical information I resorted to Zedler's *Universallexikon.* Ferdinand Hoefer's *Nouvelle Biographie Universelle.* and the various standard collections of national biographies.

Every source cited in the notes to each chapter is also listed in the bibliography, which is divided simply into items before and after 1800. Anonymous items appear in the bibliography according to the first main word in their titles. The full title, or, in the case of some pre-1800 items, as much of it as seemed necessary, together with the publication details of each item are given when it is first cited in the notes, with abbreviations being used thereafter. In the case of early modern publications, the versions of authors' names and the orthography of their book-titles that I have adopted have been taken, in the first instance, either from the Cornell catalogue or from the catalogues of the libraries in which I read them, with the actual title-pages acting as final arbiters. This means, for example, that many of the accents and capitalizations that would be found in modern French and German may be missing from my citations. The customary modernizations of individual letters have been observed, together with the usual silent expansions. Greek words in titles have been transliterated. The dates of publication are those of the editions actually used, and not necessarily the dates of their first appearance in print, although I have usually indicated discrepancies of this kind. Details of colloquia, symposia, and other conferences have usually been omitted from the citations to modern essay collections.

from early sources in English or in other languages have been spellings and punctuation unmodernized, with the exception, again, of alterations to letters and expansions. The translations of quotations in languages other than English are my own, unless a modern edition of in translation is indicated. Biblical quotations are taken from the English the ‘authorized version’ of 1611, but, except in the cases of passages from the are given with modern spellings.

ART I

Language

1

Witchcraft and Language

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
>
> John 1:1)

> Saussure's originality was to have insisted on the fact that language as a total system is complete at every moment, no matter what happens to have been altered in it a moment before. This is to say that the temporal model proposed by Saussure is that of a series of complete systems succeeding each other in time; that language is for him a perpetual present, with all the possibilities of meaning implicit in its every moment.
>
> (Fredric Jameson, *The Prison-House of Language)*

To make any kind of sense of the witchcraft beliefs of the past we need to begin with language. By this I mean not only the terms in which they were expressed, and the general systems of meaning they presupposed, but the question of how language authorizes any kind of belief at all. This last issue presents daunting problems, more relevant to the philosopher, it might be thought, than the historian. But it is forced on us at the very outset by two circumstances. One of them is a seemingly fundamental feature of witchcraft beliefs themselves: they appear to have been radically incorrect about what could happen in the real world. No doubt there were sometimes people in early modern communities, deemed witches by their neighbours, who actually sought to cause harm by something called witchcraft. But even so, we are inclined to say that their practices were void of real effects and that the harm must, therefore, have been imaginary. As for the more sensational claims, the facts of the matter are that witches could not possibly have ridden to sabbats, worshipped devils, and come away with the power of *maleficium.* In this area of the past, above all, it seems that a particular language was matched up with the world rather badly, allowing its users only to make errors about how things were.

The other circumstance is the development in modern philosophy of an overwhelming preoccupation with language and its workings (rivalled in intensity, as it happens, only by that which occurred during the age of witchcraft prosecutions itself). Such has been the scope of the arguments that now no interpreter of meanings can ignore them; the 'linguistic turn' confronts non-philosophers and philosophers alike.[1] But acceptance is another matter. The implications of putting language issues first continue to disturb intellectual and cultural historians, and studies of witchcraft have been slow to explore them. Yet one of the notions that has been called most into question is precisely the demand that a particular language-use must match up with external reality, in some ultimate fashion, if its users are not to be led into error. There has, indeed, been a fundamental shift away from the realist assumption that truths are discovered lying around in the world by sufficiently adept observers who then represent them in language, and towards the anti-realist idea that they are made by language-use itself and then commended by members of speech communities who find them good to believe. The result has been that phrases like 'the facts of the matter' have become highly contentious as guides to the status of beliefs.

---

[1] The literature is now considerable; for helpful guides to the issues as they affect historians, see John E. Toews, 'Intellectual History after the Linguistic Turn: The Autonomy of Meaning and the

There seems to be some justification, then, for looking again at those who once believed in real witches and real sabbats and wanted something drastic to be done about them. With assistance from anti-realism it should now be possible to bypass the long-standing assumption (occasionally, accusation) that, because they were making a huge empirical mistake, their animosity towards witches has to be explained by something other than conviction. This might help to provide a different focus for witchcraft studies than the one that has prevailed in recent years. And it might also show that theorizing, despite its sins, can help us to understand the past.

* * *

The assumption that beliefs in witchcraft were essentially incorrect—in the way I initially characterised them—has prevailed in witchcraft studies for so long because of an overriding, though largely unspoken, commitment to the realist model of knowledge. In this model, language is seen as a straightforward reflection of a reality outside itself and utterances are judged to be true or false according to how accurately they describe objective things. This kind of neutral reference to the external world is held to be the only reliable source of meaning and, indeed, the most important property of language. In consequence, it has been possible to account for witchcraft beliefs (like any others) in only two ways. First, they have been submitted, if only implicitly, to empirical verification to see whether they corresponded to the real activities of real people. With important exceptions, the answer has been 'no'. The entity 'witchcraft' has turned out to be a non-entity, because for the most part it had no referents in the real world. Once tested in this manner, witchcraft beliefs have then either been dismissed out of hand as mistaken and, hence, irrational, or (and this is the second possibility), they have been explained away as the secondary consequences of some genuinely real and determining condition—that is to say, some set of circumstances (social, political, economic, biological, psychic, or whatever[2]) that was objectively real in itself but gave rise to objectively false beliefs. These twin processes of falsification and explanation imply each other, of course. A mistaken

---

Irreducibility of Experience', *American Hist. Rev.* 92 (1987), 879-907; David Harlan, 'Intellectual History and the Return of Literature', American *Hist. Rev.* 94 (1989), 581-609; Gabrielle M. Spiegel, 'History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages', *Speculum,* 65 (1990), 59—86.

[2] The choice is, in principle, endless because there is no attempt to establish a *conceptual* link between conditions and consequences; the link is causal only.

belief cries out for an account of why it continued to be held despite its falseness, other than because it was believed in; while explaining a belief away depends, logically if not actually, on a prior decision that it was incapable of self-support in terms of its reference to something real. What neither process attempts, or could achieve, is interpretation of witchcraft beliefs as *beliefs,* since in the first case they are rejected as meaningless, and in the second they are reduced to the epiphenomenal reflexes of other things.

Surveys of witchcraft studies used to speak of deep differences in approaches to the subject. They distinguished between ‘rationalists’, who treated witchcraft beliefs as delusions that were eventually argued away by enlightened intellectuals; ‘romantics’, who presented them as, albeit distorted, descriptions of activities that actually went on; and ‘social scientists’, who saw them as the products of various stresses and strains in early modern society? But from the perspective of theories of language and meaning, these various approaches do not differ at all; they have all been equally committed to the principle of reference. Rationalism in the history of witchcraft has only been a rather pure version of the dismissal as irrational of any belief not warranted by correspondence to objective fact. And much of the social science of the ‘witch hunts’ has hinged on the search for the real (usually pathological) conditions that would explain the holding of beliefs that otherwise lacked a purchase on reality? At first sight, the so-called ‘romantic’ desire to trace the designation ‘witchcraft’ to real people doing real things seems to be the exception. Here, the belief in witches was not regarded as fundamentally mistaken—only exaggerated. But, of course, referentiality was still involved here, since the criterion for holding a correct or mistaken belief remained that of conformity or lack of conformity to something objectively real. The search for a referent was common, then, to all three styles of enquiry; they varied only in their success in finding it.

This may seem an excessively philosophical characterization of past witchcraft research, but it is borne out by the relative lack of interpretations of witchcraft beliefs in terms of either their intrinsic meaning or their capacity to inspire meaningful actions? Traces of realism can also be found in the still-repeated description of them

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[3] Sccc.g. E. William Monter,‘The Historiography of European Witchcraft. Progress and Prospects’, *J. Interdisciplinary Hist.* 2 (1971-2), 435-51; Robert Muchembled, ‘Satan ou les hommes? La Chasse aux sorcières et ses causes’, in Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat, Willem Frijhoff, and Robert Muchembled, *Prophètes et sorciers dans les Pays-Bas: XIT-Xl'llf siècle* (Paris, 1978), 20-7.

[4] Rodney Needham, *Primordial Characters* (Charlottesville, Va., 1978), 27-30, notices that the highly influential explanation of witchcraft accusations in terms of social ‘strains’ originated among anthropologists who assumed that, since witchcraft did not exist for them, it could not exist for anyone else. *1 his presumption was not made in connection with other things they studied, e.g. gods, ancestral spirits, and so on. The need to ‘explain’ witchcraft prosecutions and beliefs, but not other similar phenomena, is also remarked on by Christina Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion: The Politics of Popular Belief* (Oxford, 1984), 46-7. For the interpretative problems that have arisen from the attribution of error to believers in witchcraft, see Paul Hirst and Penny Woolley, *Social Relations and Human Attributes* (London, 1982), 211—/3.

’ Two important exceptions, where the style of analysis of the witchcraft beliefs of intellectuals is similar to mine, are Gerd Schwerhoff, ‘Rationalist im Wahn. Zum gelehrten Diskurs über die Hexen in der friihen Neuzeit’, *Saeculum,* 37 (1986), 45-82, and Sophie I Ioudard, *Les Sciences du diable: Quatre Discours sur la sorcellerie* (Paris, 1992).

as 'delusions' and 'fantasies'.[6] For the situation to change, a different notion of language will have to be considered—in particular, that it should not be asked to follow reality but be allowed to constitute it. Here, the object of attention would become language itself, not the relationship between language and the extra-linguistic world. And the aim would be to uncover the linguistic circumstances that enabled the utterances and actions associated with witchcraft belief to convey meaning. This would not, of course, transform impossibilities into possibilities, or mistakes into truths. Rather—and this is the crux of the matter—these distinctions would themselves become irrelevant; the idea of making them would no longer itself make historical sense. Witchcraft's apparent lack of reality as an objective fact would simply become a non-issue, and the consequent need to reduce witchcraft beliefs to some more real aspect of experience would go away. This is not to say that the social, political, economic, biological, psychic (or whatever) elements in the history of witchcraft would go away too; only that these would become the idioms of witchcraft beliefs, not their determinants. Understanding these idioms would become the goal of an essentially interpretative enquiry.[7]

The animating principle of this alternative account of language and meaning is the relationship not of reference but of difference. Following Saussure it has become common to assume that, as a system of signs, a language is composed of units that have only a differential, not a positive, identity. This applies not merely to signs as signifiers but to signs as signifieds—to the content of what is said as well as its form. The essential point is that success in conveying meanings—linguistic felicity, so to speak—relies on relationships within the system, and not on relationships between the system and something external to it. A language works perfectly well, in this account, without having to mirror the world in some manner objective to itself; indeed, what, to its users, is real about the world is a matter of what sorts of reality-apportioning statements their language successfully allows them to make. This has been taken to have crucial consequences for the attribution of truth or error to linguistic signs, for it would follow that, if what was signified was supposed by the language user to be a truth (or, for that matter, an error) concerning the external world—the world of referents—then its capacity to convey the meaning of truth (or error) would no longer be a matter of its correspondence to that world, but of its relationship to other signs for making true (or erroneous) statements about it. In post-Saussurean linguistics and semiology it has not been thought necessary to give any attention to the problem of reference to a real world, and those who do give it attention have been said to commit the 'referential fallacy'.

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[6] Given, for example, by Pieter Spierenburg, *The Broken Spell: A Cultural and Anthropological History of Preindustrial Europe* (London, 1991), 90-9; significantly, these labels are used during a discussion of witchcraft's lack of reality. For many valuable cautions concerning the contingency of rationality, the 'genuineness' of witchcraft beliefs, and the dangers of anachronism and reductionism in witchcraft research, see Geoffrey Scarre, *Witchcraft and Magic in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (London, 1987), 10-11,34-50,62-3.

[7] For the notion of 'interpretative explanation', I rely on Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York, 1983), 19-35.

This priority of the world of signs over the world of objects ought not to disconcert as much as it has. It does not imply the absurdity of the non-existence of objective things in space and time—including things in the past—only their incapacity to present themselves to us as meaningful. Nor does it suggest that the external world cannot, 'once we have programmed ourselves with a language, cause us to hold beliefs'. We invite it to do this all the time when deciding between the accuracy of alternative assertions in the same language. Indeed, within the framework of any given knowledge system (that is to say, relative to it), there is a strong temptation to talk about factual truths in realist terms. But this does not mean surrendering to the external world any of the relations of difference that enable us to make factual assertions in the first place, or expecting it to adjudicate objectively between alternative assertions in two quite different knowledge systems. All that is insisted upon, to borrow Richard Rorty's terms, is the contingency of language. What this amounts to is that human beings make truths (as well as errors) by making the sentences to express them, and the sign systems in which to say the sentences. They do not find them lying around in the external world waiting to be discovered and then accurately described in language. Because truths are made, they could be otherwise than they are—that is to say, relative to a wholly different way of talking about the world. And there can be no independent test of their accuracy in terms of correspondence with reality. No language-as-a-whole can be privileged over any other on these grounds. This would presuppose some extra-linguistic criterion, some 'God's eye standpoint—one which has somehow broken out of our language and our beliefs and tested them against something known without their aid'. We may continue, then, to use realist notions of truth and, indeed, reference, to connect our own language to the world but, on this account, these notions can relate only to our particular view of it, where they help to celebrate its internal success in making sense of things.[8]

At this point, it is tempting to re-emphasize what was implied at the outset: that the historian of witchcraft *is in particular need* of these views of language because witchcraft beliefs are an obvious example of signs that had no referents in the real world. But we can now see that to put it this way already concedes the realists' point—it sets up the problem of understanding the beliefs in referentialist terms. Naturally, those who believed in witchcraft thought that their beliefs did correspond with reality. From within the vantage point of a language it is customary to suppose that signs describing reality do work in this way; and if it is the only (or even the main) language the users have to think with, they cannot, without absurdity, think that their thought is wrong. Neither, indeed, can their historians, for whom some form of relativism is just as much a necessity. Whether witchcraft beliefs did *in fact* correspond with reality becomes, therefore, a question not worth asking—because there is simply no way to arrive at an extra-linguistic answer to it. Nor is it a question worth

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• Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (2 vols.; Cambridge, 1991), i. 6; the notion of a 'God's eye standpoint' is Hilary Putnam's. For the simultaneity of realism 'within a framework' and relativism 'between frameworks', see Yehuda Elkana, 'Two-Tier-Thinking: Philosophical Realism and Historical Relativism*, *Social Stud, of Science,* 8 (1978), 309-26.

asking even in cases of historical beliefs that look to us like very good candidates for referential success. The views about language I have been summarizing have been intended to apply to *all* language systems—not merely those systems sustaining beliefs with no apparent referents, or concerned with obviously arbitrary matters like social institutions and culturally constituted behaviour, but those dealing with the 'hardest' sciences and the most concrete claims about physical, material things. All of these, it is said, deal with made, not discovered truths. The historian of witchcraft is, thus, no more in need of a non-referential account of language than anyone who wishes to know how things make the sense (or non-sense) they do to those who successfully construe them in signs.

* * *

This is patently not the place to attempt to settle disputes in the philosophy of language, and the one between realists and anti-realists is not, in any case, resolvable in a clear-cut way. I shall proceed on the assumption that the historian 'cannot but be a simple relativist' and see what happens.[9] Nowhere in the book that follows, then, is any attention paid to the referential truth or falsity of witchcraft beliefs, other than as, themselves, subjects of debate in early modern Europe. Whether witchcraft was real or unreal is entirely irrelevant to what I have to say about these beliefs, except, again, as one of the questions they were deployed to consider. Nor will any reasons be sought for their existence other than those to do with the construction and distribution of, and relationships between, meanings.[10]

It seems important, therefore, to devote a preliminary sequence of chapters to those features of early modern language systems—logical relationships of opposition, metaphors of inversion, schemes of classification, taxonomies, rhetorical strategics, and the like—that enabled witchcraft to mean anything at all. I shall be concentrating in these early chapters on the aspects of devil-worship in witchcraft, notably the concept of the witches' sabbat, partly because these lay at the centre of attention in many of the texts under review, but also because of precisely that quality that has made them such a problem to modern interpreters—their apparent failure to refer. Examining beliefs in such matters, while ignoring altogether the ontological status of their contents, will, I hope, have the effect of forcing attention instead onto the structural conditions for their existence and development. This is what I have also attempted in the allied matter of witchcraft's conceptual association with women.

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[9] Elkana, 'Two-Tier-Thinking', 317.

[10] I am in agreement with Houdart, [illegible] *Sciences du diable*, 21-5, whose stress is also on the discursive and representational aspects of witchcraft beliefs and who likewise declines either to evaluate 'leur quotient de véracité' or to write l'histoire du référent'. For a similar approach to the interpretation of witchcraft confessions, see Robert Rowland, ' "Fantasticall and Devilishe Persons": European Witch-Beliefs in Comparative Perspective', in Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (eds.), *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford, 1990), 180. On the more general problem of the relationship between text and reality, I follow Roger Chartier, *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations* (Cambridge, 1988), 43: 'The relationship of the text to reality (which can perhaps be defined as what the text itself posits as real by constituting it as an outside referent) is constructed in accordance with discursive models and intellectual categories particular to each writing situation.'

In fact, what becomes quickly apparent about witchcraft as a category in language are the relations of difference that were everywhere at work when early modern Europeans construed it. Ironically, it turns out to be a classic example of a Saussurean sign, with its meaning located not positively in the actions of witches but negatively and contrastively in relation to the meanings of *other* actions known at the time. Witchcraft was construed dialectically in terms of what it was not; what was significant about it was not its substance but the system of oppositions that it established and fulfilled.[11] The witch—like Satan himself—could only be a contingent being, always ‘a function of another, not an independent entity’.[12] At the level we are about to explore—that of demonological texts—witchcraft may even be one of the most extreme examples of oppositionalism in Western culture. As we read these texts we are driven by a kind of logical imperative to understand what they say in binary terms; each item under discussion, even if expressed singly, demands a kind of pairing with the thing it opposes and a kind of analogy with other similar pairings—the demands, in effect, of a dual classification system. In this respect, demonology was subject to the same cognitive necessity that made ‘atheism’ a matter of debate among seventeenth-century French intellectuals, in whose ‘manner of thought’, it has been said, there was ‘the obligation to create the antithesis of their own belief’.[13]

The peculiar fascination of the concept of witchcraft, then, is that it displays on its sleeve, so to speak, the very means of its formation. It is an example of the relations of difference that underlie all signification being laid bare in the construction of one particular sign. This feature, fundamental to what follows, was also central to Malcolm Crick’s appeal, made two decades ago, for a semantic anthropology of witchcraft:

> The identity ‘witch’ is only one on a board which contains other persons with differently specified characteristics.... We could say that to tackle ‘witchcraft’ as if it were an isolable problem would be like someone unfamiliar with the game of chess observing a series of movements and then writing a book on ‘bishops’. The point is that the ‘bishop’ cannot be understood apart from—indeed exists only by virtue of—the whole system of definitions and rules which constitute chess. In Saussurian terms ... the value of the bishop (or witch) derives from all the other pieces which the bishop (or witch) is not. Neither has any significance in isolation—a striking demonstration of the way in which anthropology is a species of inquiry into the nature of semantic identities.[14]

[11] I derive this remark from Michael Lambek, *Human Spirits: A Cultural Account of Trance in Alayotte* (Cambridge, 1982), 35,40, 183; see also 151-80, for an account of the system of oppositions from which Mayotte spirit possession is constructed (on Lambek, see also below, Ch. 26). For other helpful remarks about the symbiotic quality of symbolic oppositions, see Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Rites ofAssent: Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America* (London, 1993), 184,211-12.

[12] Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Aly th* (Princeton, 1987), 4.

[13] Alan C. *Kors, Atheism in France, 1650-1729,* i. *The Orthodox Sources of Disbelief* (Princeton, 1990), 81; see also 79: ‘ “Theism” entails the concept, if not the categories, of “atheism”. It is a believing culture that generates its own antithesis, disbelief in the principles of its own beliefs.’

[14] Malcolm Crick, *Explorations in Language andAf caning: Towards A Semantic Anthropology* (London, 1976), 116; the supporting passage from Saussure cited by Crick is in Ferdinand de Saussurc, Coww *in General Linguistics,* ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehayc, trans, and annotated Roy Harris (London, 1983), 108-9.

Here the historian, like an ethnographer of language, can concentrate quite precisely on the properties conferred on witchcraft by representational conventions, on the resources and repertoires of linguistic behaviour that enabled witches to mean something to those who wrote about them, and on the way ‘the facts of the matter’ were produced by the perceptual codes of a speech community ofintellectuals.[15]

It is clear, for example, that close analogies existed between the logical and rhetorical structures for expressing demonology' and the (alleged) behaviour of witches. Like the humanist historians studied by Nancy Struever, writers on witchcraft assumed that the forms of their arguments were also the forms of the events they described.[16] At the same time, these patterns of meaning were also subject to internal instability and artificiality. Recently the idea that truths (because they originate in language) are not so much found as made has been put to work to undercut the essentialism and universalism that inheres in any claim about the ‘natural’ state of affairs—especially where what is natural is presented in terms of binary opposition. The aim has been to reveal that things assumed to be inevitable and unchanging are in fact cultural and contingent. This too had parallels in early modern demonology. Presented as a natural and unchanging truth, demonism became so dependent on particular linguistic strategies—particularly, binary oppositions—that it came to be seen as the product, rather than the subject-matter, of its own language. What was implicit in its formation became explicit, with damaging implications for its credibility. Since this may well have been far more important in the decline of witchcraft beliefs than any kind of empirical falsification, it will also be a theme of the chapters that follow.[11]

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[11] For the notion of a speech community and its linguistic resources, see Richard Bauman and Joel aherzer (eds.), *Exploration! in the Ethnography of Speaking* (Cambridge, 1974), 6-8.

“ ‘ʌnCy S' S'™cver- The *Language of History in the Renaissance: Rhetorical and Historical Consciousness in Florentine Humanism* (Princeton, 1970), 81,125.

2

Festivals and Sabbats

> The Lord preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow; but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.
>
> (Psalms 146:9)

> And now bad Christians ... run about at the time of Carnival with masks and jests and other superstitions. Similarly witches use these revelries of the devil for their own advantage, and work their spells about the time of the New Year.
>
> ([Heinrich Kramer (Institoris) and Jakob Sprenger], *Malleus maleficarum)*

In a drawing made in 1514 by the Swabian artist Hans Baldung Grien (or by someone in his workshop) three female witches engage in a wild revel (Fig. 1). Because there is nothing in the scene but their naked bodies, our reading of it must depend on how we interpret the gestures they make; there is just no other significant symbolism to be had.[1] As with most visual images of witchcraft, several interpretations are possible. One of them is that witchcraft is festive; the witches seem almost to be leapfrogging over each other. But theirs is not normal amusement, safely regulated by the controls that turn games into assets of the social order. Play is certainly suggested, and with it the acknowledgement of rules and rituals, but at the same time the rules are being broken and the rituals losing their form. This is because witchcraft is also irrational, in the sense that it subverts reason's governing influence over behaviour. Baldung's witches move with trance-like motions and adopt grotesque poses. They disrupt the idea of orderly conduct, of conformity to the civilizing process, and suggest instead the power of fantasy and passion, and the dangers of sexuality. For witchcraft is erotic too. Two of the bodies are young and meant to be alluring to men. They are positioned so that they entice; they expose and conceal in equal measure. Yet the third witch interrupts these associations, reminding us that demonic lust is indifferent to age or beauty. Once more, Baldung's drawing conveys an ambivalence, this time between exuberant sexual pleasure and indiscriminate, unbridled desire.[2]

These themes—travesty, disorder, ambivalence—will reappear many times in the

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[1] Technical information in Carl Koch, *Die Zeichnungen Hans Baldung Griens* (Berlin, 1941), 99-100 (Cat. no. 62). Commentary in G. F. Hartlaub, *Hans Baldung Grien—Hexenbilder (Stuttgart,* 1961), 16-17; Gustav Radbruch, 'Hans Baldungs Hexenbilder', in id., *Elegantiae Juris Criminalis. Vierzehn Studien zur Geschichte des Strafrechts,* 2nd edn. (Basel, 1950), 43-1; Linda C. Hulls, 'Baldung and the Witches of Freiburg: The Evidence of Images', *J. Interdisciplinary Hist.* 18 (1987-8), 249-76, esp. 267-9. The symbolic bareness of this drawing distinguishes it from Baldung's other representations of witchcraft.

[2] For an exploration of the sexual themes in visual representations of witchcraft in Germany at this time, see Charles Zika, 'Fears of Flying: Representations of Witchcraft and Sexuality in Early Sixteenth-Century Germany', *Australian J. of Art,* 8 (1989), 19^17.

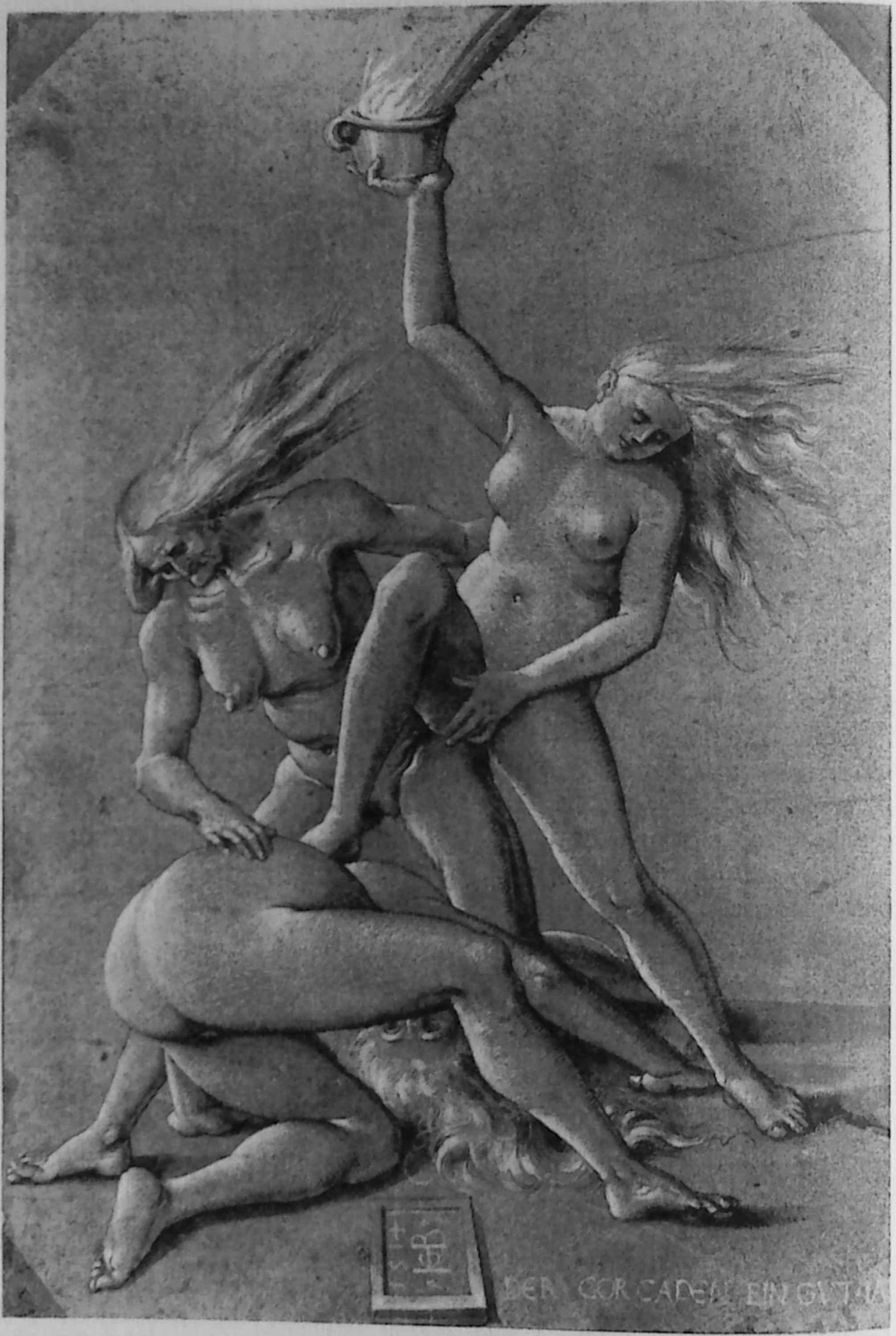
DER COR CADEN EIN GVT

Fig.1 Drawing of witches made in 1514 by Hans Baldung Grien (1480–1454). From Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

discussions that follow. But there is something else in Baldung's *Grttppe dreier wildbewegter Hexen* that is so important as a representation of witchcraft that it must be singled out here and given priority. Informing everything in the scene, and establishing iconographically that it is indeed a scene of witchcraft, is the gesture of the witch who, bent on one knee, stares backwards at the world through her own legs. According to a contemporary German proverb those who adopted the pose would be sure to catch sight of the devil. This is perhaps the reason why the motif is also found among the monsters and devils who populate two widely separated versions of that most demonological of picture subjects, the temptation of St Anthony—those of Hieronymus Bosch (r. 1490s) and Jacques Callot (1635)? But without the support of any tradition it would still be an obvious clue. It is not part of the game, nor is it a casual, random product of the trance—nor just an opportunity for male voyeurism. The witch who adopts it is the only participant not wholly absorbed by what all three are doing and, thus, the only one capable of offering any kind of comment on their behaviour. Above all, hers is the only gaze with which the spectator can and, therefore, must engage. This alerts us to the defining quality of what she sees—the world of the spectator, the ordinary world, turned upside down—and also to the need for the spectator too to see things in this way if the meaning of the drawing is to be grasped.

Witchcraft, Baldung is reminding us, is an act of pure inversion. Witches model their behaviour on our world, just as we do. Because their inspiration is demonic, their perception is overturned; they see and do everything the wrong way up. But only one world and only one language is involved? The one direct line of sight between Baldung's witches and the spectator tells us this. If there was no access in and out of the drawing—if all three witches were as inwardly preoccupied as two of them undoubtedly are—this would suggest that their world was independent of ours and that its meanings were autonomous. This visual encounter is not, however, the ordinary one in which the spectator is invited didactically into the 'picture space' to participate in its actions and values. Baldung was not inviting anybody to the sabbat; instead, he was telling his contemporaries how to *interpret* the sabbat. The exchange was one of perfect reciprocity between the world they knew and its exactly inverted replica. Once they imagined what that world looked like from the witches' point of view, they could then make sense of witchcraft behaviour as a transformation of their own.

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[1] Lisa Farber has kindly alerted me to playful versions among Baldung's own putti, for example in his *Maria mil Jem Kin J unJ Engeln in einer I.anJschaft.* A putto also attempts the pose in Diircr's *The weather witch,* and there is a further version in a depiction of the temptation of St Anthony by a disciple of Pieter Huvs. See also Jean Wirth, 'La Demonologie de Bosch', in *Diabies et Jiableries: La Representation Ju Jia'ble Jans la gravure Jes IS' et 16' siecles* (Geneva, 1977), 73, for more demonic versions; Lenc Dresen-Coenders, 'Witches as Devils' Concubines. On the Origin of Fear of Witches and Protection against Witchcraft', in ead. (ed.), *Sainis and She-Devils: Images of Women in the ISth anJ 16th Centuries,* trans. C. M. H. Sion and R. M. J. van der Wilden (London, 1987), 72-6, on the motif in Bosch; and Sigrid Schade, *Zur Cenese Jes voyeuristischen Slicks* (Giessen, 1984), 73 ff., on the general symbolism of the motif. I owe the point about the existence of a proverb on the subject to Charles Zika.

[4] A point made also by Michel de Certeau, *L Absent Je I liistoire* (n.p., 1973), 33.

Baldung’s depiction of witchcraft—in which natural inversion was a sign of cultural preposterousness—was, in fact, common among the witchcraft authors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Nicolas Rémy, *procureur général* of the duchy of Lorraine between 1591 and 1606, wrote typically of the ‘preposterous inversion’ of the witches’ dances and rituals:

> they love to do everything in a ridiculous and unseemly manner. For they turn their backs towards the Demons when they go to worship them, and approach them sideways like a crab; when they hold out their hands in supplication they turn them downwards; when they converse they bend their eyes toward the ground; and in other such ways they behave in a manner opposite to that of other men.[5]

The Italians Paolo Grillando, Giovanni Lorenzo D’Anania, and Francesco Maria Guazzo all agreed that everything at the sabbat was absurdly performed. Grillando wrote that the devil was venerated in a way ‘directly in opposition to that reverence which it is usual for us to show’, and he and D’Anania spoke of witches ‘not turning their face, but their backs towards him, and bowing their head not downward towards their breast, but backward upon their shoulders’. Their dances, too, were ‘utterly unlike ours, for, with the women clinging to the men’s backs *(foeminae namque post dorsum masculis inliaerentes),* they dance backward, bowing their bodies forward, and their head not forward but backward’.[6]

Pierre de Lancre, perhaps the greatest expert of all on the sabbat, as well as a magistrate in witchcraft trials, confirmed that all its rituals were ‘preposterous and done in the wrong way’. He remarked on an extraordinary detail—that witches worshipped the devil not only facing backwards but with their feet in the air. A 15-year-old deponent had described to him how, when the (black) Host was elevated in front of the devil, both the ‘celebrants’ and the ‘priest’ remained inverted until the beginning of the Credo: ‘yet in making this elevation ... the body and arms of the priest were correspondingly as high as our priests’ are when they make the true elevation in the Church of God; for at the sabbat the devil makes everything appear upside-down.’ From Protestant Marburg in Germany, Philipp Ludwig Elich also wrote of witches ‘approaching [the devil] with their back towards him like crabs, to worship not on bended knee but with feet thrown high, nor with head bowed forward but thrown back’, so that *osculum infame* was more easily achieved. ‘They do everything’, he explained, ‘with the most ridiculous ceremonies, altogether different from all human custom.’ The eminent Jesuit scholar and counter-reformer Juan Maldonado, who taught at the Collège de Clermont in Paris in the 1560s and 1570s, described the same inversions in his demonology (and, presumably, in his lectures), saying he had found them reported in a book on witches and demons by a distinguished Catholic theologian of an earlier period, the Roman Inquisitor and Dominican (and antagonist of Luther) Silvestro Da Prierio (Mazzolini).[7]

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[5] Nicolas Rémy, *Demonolatry*, ed. Montague Summers, trans. E. A. Ashwin (London, 1930), 61; originally pub. as *Daemonolatreiae libri tres* (Lyons, 1595).

[6] Paolo Grillando, *Tractatus de sortilegiis,* in *Malleus maleficarum, maleficas et earum haeresim framea conterens, ex variis auctoribus compilatus* (4 vols. in 2; Lyons, 1669), i (vol. 2, pt. 2), 273 (Grillando’s *Tractatus* was written c. 1525 and first pub. Lyons, 1536); Giovanni Lorenzo D’Anania, *De natura daemonum* (Venice, 1581), 147-8; cf. Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum*, ed. Montague Summers, trans. E. A. Ashwin (London, 1929), 35,37-8 (originally pub. Milan, 1608). D’Anania’s description was repeated by the Italian physician Giovanni Battista Codronchi, *De morbis veneficis ac veneficiis* (Venice, 1595), fo. 130'".

According to Baldung, witchcraft required an act of self-understanding from its interpreters. Here is the same principle at work, not to and fro along the line of vision between observer and observed, but in the see-saw language of the French theologian and former Catholic *ligueur* Jean Boucher. Witches, he wrote in 1624, do everything *à rebours'*.

> [They] make the sign of the cross with the left hand, instead of the right, say the Mass upside-down and often naked, instead of clothed, sometimes raised into the air head down and feet up, instead of upright with feet on the ground; and in this position they elevate a black host, instead of a white, and sometimes triangular instead of round; they kiss the backside, instead of the mouth, make banquets without bread or wine, in contempt of the sacramental species, and worship the devil, instead of God; they give sermons that exhort men to take revenge, to slander, to be lecherous, to steal and murder, to corrupt and ruin others.[8]

In English intellectual circles, the sabbat was less of a preoccupation, and witchcraft was not as frequently characterized in this manner. But witches were seen and not merely described in the anti-masque to Ben Jonson's *Masque of queenes* in 1609, and the rigorous one-point perspective of Inigo Jones's stage-settings suggests a visual encounter not unlike the one provided by Baldung. Drawing on his careful research in European demonology, Jonson requested that the witches' dance be:

> full of pracpostcrous change, and gesticulation, but most applying to theyr property: who, at theyr meetings, do all thinges contrary to the custome of Men, dauncing back to back, hip to hip, theyr handcs joyn'd, and making theyr circles backward, to the left hand, with strange phantastique motions of theyr heads, and bodyes.[9]

That witches did everything backwards was, indeed, as much a commonplace of scholarly demonology as it has been of romantic fiction since. But in this respect they were not alone. Throughout the later medieval and Renaissance period ritual inversion was also typical of European festive behaviour outside the world of the sabbat. It was a defining element in what C. L. Barber called the ‘Saturnalian pattern’ and what now tends to be labelled ‘the carnivalesque’.[10] In other respects, the settings were enormously varied; they included village folk-rites, the games played in churches and schools, town and city carnivals, and university and court entertainments. They embraced high, middle, and low cultures, clerics and lay people, urban and rural communities; and they were imagined in works of fiction and satire, as with Rabelais’ anti-monastery, the Abbaye de Thélème, and Erasmus’s *Praise of Folly,* as well as experienced as social realities.[11] What they had in common was a licence to indulge in ‘misrule’, to promote a disorder based on the temporary but complete reversal of customary priorities of status and value. One recurring idea was the elevation of wise folly over foolish wisdom. Another was the exchange of sex roles in the image of the ‘woman on top’ and in transvestism. Clerical parodies of divine service substituted the profane for the sacred, and low for high office. Most pervasive of all were their secular equivalents—the mock political authorities, the *princes des sots* or ‘abbeys’ and ‘lords’ of misrule and unreason, who presided over ephemeral commonwealths complete with the paraphernalia of serious kingship but dedicated to satire and clowning.[12]

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[7] Pierre de l^incre, *Tableau de Tinconstance des mauvais anges et demons, ou il est amplement traicte des sorciers et de la sorcelerie* (Paris, 1612), 75, 460; Philipp Ludwig Elich, *Daemonomagia; sive libellus erotematikos, de daemonis cacurgia, cacomagorum et lamiarum energia* (Frankfurt/Main, 1607), 132, 135; Juan Maldonado, *Traictedes anges et demons,* trans. Francois de La Boric (Paris, 1605), fo. 21 Ir“* (not published in the original Latin); Silvestro Da Prierio [Mazzolini], *De strigimagarum, daemonumque mirandis* (Rome, 1575), 137 (written in 1520). From many other examples, sec Alfonso de Castro, *De iusta haereticorum punitione* (Venice, 1549), 83; Pedro de Valderrama, *Histoire generate du monde, et de la nature... Divisez en trois livres... Le troisiesfme] des grades diverses des demons... de leur science appellee magie... des diverses parties di [«?] la magie, et plusieurs autres illusions diaboliques,* trans, from Spanish by the Sieur de La Richardiere, 2nd edn. in 2 pts. (Paris, 1619, 1617), bk. 3, 226; Thomas Heywood, *The hierarchic of the* ***blessed angells*** (London, 1634), 472.

[1] Jean Boucher, *Couronne mystique ou armes de piete, contre toute sorte d'impiete, heresie, atheisme, schisme, magie et mahometisme, par un signe ou hieroglyphique mysterieux en forme de couronne* (Tournai, 1624), 545-6.

[9] I have used the text of the *Alasque ofqueenes* with Jonson's annotations in *Ben Jonson* [Works], cd. C. H. Herford and P. and E. Simpson (11 vols.; Oxford, 1925-52), vii. 278-319, quotation at 11. 3+1-50; cf. Anon., *A pleasant treatise of witches* (London, 1673), 6.

Often these various modes of topsy-turvydom were invoked simultaneously, as in the ecclesiastical ‘feast of fools’, and the revels and burlesques of the French urban confraternities, the *sociétés joyeuses.* Carnival itself was a cluster of inversionary rituals conducted on a grand scale and in an explosive manner. Its organization was often in the hands of those who were generally the promoters of misrule in a community. And its individual ingredients—licence, consumption, disguise, play—were in obvious antithesis to the components of everyday life. Above all, Carnival was defined as the pre-inversion of Lent; the two adjacent festivals warred with each other both in ritualized combat and in terms of their symbolic contrasts.[13] On other

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[10] C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare'j Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relation to Social Custom* (Princeton, 1959), 3-15.

[11] Rosalie L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton, 1966), 50-1; Donald Gwynn Watson, ‘Erasmus’ *Praise ofFolly* and the Spirit of Carnival’, *Renaissance Quart.* 32 (1979), 333-42.

[12] From a very large literature, sec E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage* (2 vols.; Oxford, 1903), i. 274-335; E. Wclsford, *The Fool: //is Social and Literary History* (London, 1935), 197-217; Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World,* trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), 5-12, 74-9, 81-2; Jacques Heers, *Fêtes, jeux etjoutes dans les sociétés d'occident d la fm du moyen âge* (Paris, 1971), 119-46; N. Z. Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (London, 1975), 97-123 (‘The Reasons of Misrule’), 124-51 (‘Women on I op’); Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy,* 16-35; Yves-Marie Bercé, *Fête et révolte: Des mentalités populaires du XIT au XWir siècle* (Paris, 1976), 16-53; Sandra Billington, *A Social History of the Pool* (Brighton, 1984); cad., Afodr *Kings in Medieval Society and Renaissance Drama* (Oxford, 1991), 1-113; Francois Laroque, *Shakespeare's Festive World: Elizabethan Seasonal Entertainment and the Professional Stage,* trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge, 1991), 60-4,96-101,151-4.

” The themes of Carnival are conveniently summarized by Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1978), 182-91, and John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1985), 42-5. See also C. Gaignebet, ‘Le Combat de Carnaval et de Carême de P. Bruegel (1559)’, *Annales E.S.C.* 27 (1972), 313-45; Michael D. Bristol, *Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of* occasions, one relationship was explored. The street charivari, in which partners in incompatible or violent marriages (often, re-marriages) were ridiculed by the symbolic ride backwards and by the making of‘counter-music’, focused on the dangerous social and moral inversions implied when familial disorder threatened patriarchal rule.[14] Similarly, ‘barring out’ the master in English grammar schools depended on assumptions about the limits of pedagogic government over pupils, especially with the onset of the vacation.[15] Whatever the case, however, seasonal misrule was not simply a matter of riot or confusion, nor were its meanings casual or indiscriminate. It involved conventional styles of ritual and symbol associated with inversion—what Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* called ‘uncivil rule’.

It would be remarkable if no links could be established between these other forms of inverted behaviour and the descriptions of witchcraft and demonism with which we began.[16] True, festive misrule had deep roots in the medieval and, indeed, classical past. It was prominent long before the age of demonology and witchcraft trials, and it continued to make sense when they no longer did—for example, in the form of the English masquerade.[17] But if, during the sixteenth century, medieval Europe’s most elaborate inversionary ritual—the clerical ‘feast of fools’—was in terminal decline, others enjoyed their moment of greatest popularity. The *societe's joyeuses* flourished between the end of the fifteenth and the middle of the seventeenth centuries; licensed misrule, according to Keith Thomas, was ‘ubiquitous’ in early modern England and ‘fundamental’ to its life; throughout southern Europe, Carnival was in its most extravagant phase.” Saturnalian styles abandoned by the Church were

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Authority in Renaissance England (London, 1985), 26-103; Samuel Kinser, *Rabelais* Carnival: Text, Context, Metatext* (Berkeley, 1990), 46-60. The classic studies are Julio Caro Baroja, *El Camaval* (Madrid, 1965), and C. Gaignebct and Marie-Claude Florentin, *Le Camaval, essaisde mythologie populaire* (Paris, 1974).

[14] The best all-round treatment is provided by the essays in Jacques Le GofTand Jean-Claude Schmitt (eds.), *Le Charivari* (Paris, 1981). See also E. P. Thompson, ‘ “Rough Music”: Lc charivari anglais’. *Annates E.S.C.* 27 (1972), 285-312 (rev. version in id., *Customs in Common* (London, 1991), 467-538); J.-C. Margolin, ‘Charivari ct mariagc ridicule au temps de la Renaissance’, in J. Jacquot and E. Konigson (eds.), *Les Fêtes de la Renaissance,* iii (Paris, 1975), 579-601; Martin Ingram, ‘Ridings, Rough Music and the “Reform of Popular Culture” in Early Modern England*, *Past and Present,* 105 (1984), 79-113; id., ‘Ridings, Rough Music and Mocking Rhymes’, in Barry Rcay (ed.), *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England (New* York, 1985), 166-97; Davis, *Society and Culture,* 97-123. The ‘counter-musical’ aspects of the charivari are the subject of Claudie Marcel-Dubois, ‘Fetes villagcoiscs et vacarmes cérémonicls ou une musique ct son contraire’, in Jacquot and Konigson (eds.), *Fetes de la Renaissance,* iii. 603-15.

[11] K. V. Thomas, *Rule and Misrule in the Schools of Early Modern England* (Reading, 1976).

[16] For an analysis parallel to mine, see Dominique Lesourd, ‘Culture savantc et culture populaire dans la mythologie de la sorcllerie’, *Anagram,* 3-4 (1973), 63-79, esp. 65: ‘e'est par l’intermcdiaire du monde carnavalcsque que le thème de (’inversion cst apparu dans le sabbat*. Cf. Guiscppc Cocchiara, *Il mondo alia rovescia* (Turin, 1963), 210-12; Certeau, *L’Absent de Fhistoire,* 33.

[17] Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction (London,* 1986), 1-51; cf. Robert M. Ishcrwood, *Farce and Fantasy: Popular Entertainment in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Oxford, 1986), 252-5, for the *longue duree* of popular festive themes.

[11] Welsford, *The Fool,* 203; Thomas, *Rule and Misrule,* 32,4; Martine Grinberg, ‘Girnaval ct socicte urbainc à la fin du XV sièclc’, in Jacquot and Konigson (eds.), *Fetes de la Renaissance,* iii. 553.

taken over by secular enthusiasts—craftsmen and guildsmen, lawyers and students, aristocrats and courtiers. It looks very much as though the great age of the witch was also the great age of the fool.

There were, in any case, close symbolic parallels between witchcraft and inversionary *sottisme.* The inferior clergy of later medieval France celebrated Christmas and the New Year with burlesques of which the devil—who was, after all, the 'ape' of God—would have been proud. The list of*parodiae sacrae* is a long one but impressive for its very inclusiveness; they intoned meaningless liturgy, sang in dissonances, rang bells to symbolize folly, brayed and howled like asses, made indecent gestures and contortions, wore hideous animal masks, repeated prayers in gibberish, cursed rather than blessed their 'congregations', mocked the sermon with fatuous imitations, parodied high office with inversions of place, title, role, and costume, and negated the sacredness of holy places with dicing, running, feasts, and even nudity. Even in decline, the feast of fools at Chalons-sur-Marne in 1570 involved a banquet on a platform in front of the cathedral porch, a procession in which a 'bishop of fools' was led on an ass and ritually invested with the symbols of high ecclesiastical office, the invasion of the cathedral by the inferior clergy' grimacing and singing nonsense, a musical cavalcade, and a band that howled and clanged kettles and saucepans. As late as 1645 the lay brothers of Antibes marked Innocents' Day by wearing church vestments inside out, holding liturgical books upside-down, and using spectacles with orange peel in them instead of glass.[19]

How great, really, is the distance between these elaborate satires, and the ritualized profanities of the demonic sabbat; between the clerics who danced dressed as women, or with their cowls back-to-front, and the witches who danced back-to-back, and in reverse; between censing with puddings, smelly shoes, and even excrement, and sprinkling goat's urine through a black aspergillum?[20] In 1445 the theology faculty of the university of Paris complained that clerics in their revels ate black puddings at the altar while mass was being celebrated, and sang wanton songs instead of the correct office.[21] A century and a half later, witches were said to use slices of black turnip for Hosts, and demoniacs sang Psalms with rude words as well as 'nicknaming every worde in the Lordes prayer'.[22] Hence the suggestion that the latter may have

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” Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*, i. 305 (Chalons-sur-Marne), 317 (Antibes).

[20] Clerical inversions in Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage,* i. 294, 321, and Bakhtin, *Rabelais,* 147; witchcraft inversions above, pp. 14-15,and Florimondde*Rzemond, L'Antichrist*(Lyons, 1597), 102-5;Robert Mandrou (ed.), *Possession el sorcellerie au Xt'lf siecle* (Paris, 1979), 24.

[21] Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage,* i. 294.

[22] George More, *A true discourse concerning the certaine possession and dispossession of7 persons in onefamilie in Lancashire* (n.p. [Middleburg], 1600), 55-6. On black Hosts, sec Racmond, *L'Antichrist,* 102-5 (citing evidence from a trial in 1594 in Aquitaine; the same detail was related by Martin del Rio, Henri Boguet, Francesco Guazzo, and Pierre de Lancre). On demoniacs, sec also Sebastian Khucller, *Kurtze unnd warhafftige Historia, von einerjunckfrawen, welche mil etlich unddreissig bosen Geistern leibhajftigbesessen... tvorden* (Munich, n.d.), sig. Aii' (case of Veronica Steiner, 1574), and the 17th-c. superior of the Loudun Ursulines who sang drinking songs while possessed; Jeanne des Anges, *Saur Jeanne des Anges, superieure des Ursulines de Loudun (Xl'tr siecle). Autobiographic d'une hystcriquepossedee,* ed. G. Legueand G. de La Tourette, intro. J.-M. Charcot (Paris, 1886), 140-1. Anita M. Walker and Edmund H. Dickerman, ' “A

been attributed with types of irreverence and parody that were already familiar in the behaviour of the former.[23]

The continuity of individual motifs is, in fact, striking. The ride backwards was an ideal resource of festive behaviour whenever ridicule and humour were jointly aimed at. It also had a long history in customary law as a humiliating punishment, and in visual representation as a traditional symbol of death, evil, and sin.[24] But it was a popular belief that witches too rode backwards to their sabbats on demonic mounts, a notion that found its way into the iconography of witchcraft in a further drawing by Hans Baldung, as well as in an engraving by Albrecht Dürer. In Baldung's *Die Hexen* of 1510 a young female witch rides across the sky sitting backwards on a ram or goat. Although both the choice of animal and its rider's nakedness signal again the sexual themes that Baldung explored in most of his studies of witchcraft, the more fundamental message remains that of inversion. And to confirm the sharing of this particular symbolic element, there is evidence that the charivari could be extended from its usual sphere of influence over marital affairs to cover the punishment of witches. In his *De praestigiis daemonum* the Rhineland physician Johann Weyer reported that in Bologna it was the custom, after the conviction of witches, to strip them to the waist, mount them backwards on asses with the tails in their bound hands *(asino impositos inverso corpore, ita ut ligatus manibus caudam asini),* and parade them through the town with paper mitres painted with devils on their heads. After being beaten as they passed through the streets, they were taken to the Dominican cemetery, where there was a caged balcony for the exhibition of heretics. They were held in this for fifteen minutes, exposed to the derision of the mob and its missiles, and then banished.[25]

The motif of disguise—specifically the wearing of masks—was likewise common to the festive and the demonic, and had inversionary implications for both. Terry Castle has presented the eighteenth-century masquerade as a rite of reversal whose potency in English culture stemmed not merely from its general dislocation of the normally rigid symbolism of appearance, but from an underlying code that obliged participants to dress (as well as talk and behave) as their opposites. Mere modification

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Woman under the Influence": A Case of Alleged Possession in Sixteenth-Century France', *Sixteenth Century J.* 22 (1991), 548, suggest that, as a demoniac, Marthc Brossier of Romorantin 'was not only permitted, she was expected to act in ways which represented a complete reversal of normative female behaviour'.

[23] Willem Frijhoff, 'Official and Popular Religion in Christianity: The Late Middle Ages and Early-Modern Times', in P. H. Vrijhof and J. Waardenburg (eds.), *Official and Popular Religion: Analysis of a Theme for Religious Studies* (The Hague, 1979), 111.

[24] Ruth Mellinkoff, 'Riding Backwards: Theme of Humiliation and Symbol of Evil', *Viator,* 4 (1973), 153-76; and see, in England, the punishments of the gunpowder conspirators and of the Quaker James Nayler in *A Complete Collection of State Trials,* cd. T. B. Howell (21 vols.; London, 1816), ii. col. 184; v. col. 818, and the entry 'Free-Bench' in Giles Jacob, J *new law-dictionary* (London, 1729).

[25] Johann Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum, et incantationibus ac veneficiis libri sex* (Basel, 1583), trans. John Shea in *Witches, Devils, and Doctors in the Renaissance: Johann Weyer, De praestigiis daemonum* general ed. George Mora (Binghamton, NY, 1991), 539 (Latin original, 1583 cdn., cols. 736-7). All further quotations are taken from the 1991 translation unless otherwise indicated. For a similar punishment for sorcery in the Spanish diocese of Cuenca in 1499, see Sara T. Nalle, *God in La Mancha: Religious Reform and the People of Cuenca, 1500-1650 (London,* 1992), 16.

was not enough; the logic of travesty was the logic of reversal. Contemporaries wrote of masquerades: ‘Everyone here wears a Habit which speaks him the Reverse of what he is’, and, again, ‘I found nature turned topsy-turvy.’ Castle comments: ‘If one may speak of the rhetoric of masquerade, a tropology of costume, the controlling figure was the antithesis: one was obliged to impersonate a being opposite, in some essential feature, to oneself.’ As in all forms of misrule, there was an element of disorder—the inverting of‘ordinary sexual, social, and metaphysical hierarchies’—but it was a planned and regulated disorder, both systematic and exemplary. Masking and disguise were forms of communication, inwardly as well as outwardly directed, precisely because they turned everything upside-down, not despite this.[24 * 26]

In the demonic world, the mask did similar work. It helped transform women into witches—Ben Jonson’s, for example, were ‘vizarded, and masqu’d’[27] [*]—all the while suggesting metamorphosis by enchantment, as well as symbolizing the central categories of demonic immorality; ambiguity, inconstancy, deceit, and illusion. Satan, said an Englishman in 1681, ‘walks in Masquerade’.[26] The masquerade and the sabbat were, it seems, parallel institutions, modifications of the same system of categories and the same language of symbols; Hogarth made exactly this point in his *Masquerade Ticket* (1727) by putting a depiction of the sabbat on the back wall of the masquerade room, where it reflects and reinforces the lechery and debauchery below.[29] It is not surprising to find that witches and demons were among the most popular eighteenth-century masking disguises, or that ‘the Devil was a ubiquitous presence’ in masquerades.[30] In early modern Europe, carnival devil-figures were often seen taking part in processions and even organizing festivities. They had always been essential to mystery and morality plays, and they were the eponymous hero-villains of the *diableries* that later developed from this older religious drama. But there was a particular affinity between demonism and misrule that participants in public rituals knew how to exploit. Pierre Lc Loyer, Sieur de La Brosse, was evidently referring to secular entertainments when, citing his fellow spectrologist, the Swiss minister Ludwig Lavater, he wrote: ‘the same which Lavater saith was usuall in his Countrey, is no more then is seene in France, where mummeries are very common and usuall in divers Townes in the forme and habite of spirits and divells.’[31]

[24] Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization,* 5-6,75-9,86-8 (quotations at 5).

[27] Jonson, *Masque ofQueenes,* 283,1.45.

” Henry Hallywell, *Melampronoea: or, a discourse ofthe polity and kingdom of darkness* (London, 1681), 41.

” Joseph Burke and Colin Caldwell *(yds.), Hogarth: The Complete Engravings* (London, 1968),no. 114 (and detail); Ian Bostridge, ‘Debates about Witchcraft in England 1650—1736’, D.Phil. thesis (Oxford, 1990), 308-15.

[w] Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization,* 64.

[21] Pierre Le Loyer, *A treatise of specters or straunge sights, visions and apparitions appearing sensibly unto men,* trans. Zachary Jones (London, 1605), fo. 105’. For festival devils, see Burke, *Popular Culture,* 195; Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy,* 18; Bristol, *Carnival and Theater,* 66; Mme Clément [née Hémcry], *Histoire des fêtes civiles et religieuses ...du département du Nord* (Avesnes, 1845), 59,170; Bakhtin, *Rabelais,* 90, 263-8; Samuel L. Sumberg, *The Nuremberg Schembart Carnival* (New York, 1941), 109-14, see also 132-83. For *diableries,* see Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage,* ii. 91,147-8; Emile Jolibois, *Le Diablerie de Chaumont* (Chaumont and Paris, 1838).

What Lavater himself probably had in mind were occasions like the Basel *Fastnacht* carnival, in which revellers often masked themselves as devils and witches.[32]

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This brings us to one place where the festive and the demonic most certainly intersected—in the thoughts of those who disapproved of them. Le Loyer had obviously seen devil costumes in French streets, but he thought that public play and licence were Satanic in principle; just as the devil who led the masqueraders in Hogarth's engraving of 1724, *Masquerades and Operas,* referred to a specific vocabulary of costume and, at the same time, signified the supposedly demonic origins and values of the entertainment.[33] In the eyes of would-be reformers and abolitionists there were always demonic elements at work in festivals. It was not merely a question of the immorality and disorder that accompanied them; the link was not contingent but conceptual. Nor was it a general suspicion of mimesis. There was something specifically and intrinsically demonic in vehicles for inversion like misrule, masking, and transvestism; something in the very shape of the behaviour that reminded social critics of witchcraft. According to Philip Stubbes, for example, rural practitioners of misrule encouraged in their soliciting for bread and ale what was, in effect, a propitiatory sacrifice to Satan, as well as a profanation of the sabbath.[34] In France, attempts were made by Jean Savaron and Claude Noirot to link the history and etymology of popular entertainment with those of witchcraft. Savaron believed that the words 'mommerie' and 'Mommon' had the same derivation, and that masquerading was therefore inseperable from heresy: 'if the Devil did not mask himself and transform himself into an Angel of Light, if the false Prophets, Idolaters, heretics, hypocrites, witches, and his other followers were not disguised and masqueraded in a robe of innocence, they would not attract so many people.' Savaron cited St Chrysostom to the effect that those who wore masks were promulgating the sabbat *(la feste de Satan),* and further claimed that the word 'mask' was the same as the word 'witch' in the French, Lombard, Tuscan, and English tongues. Noirot argued similarly that the Latin for mask *(larva)* suggested the Latin for witch or sorceress *(lamia)* and, thus, some internal connection between disguising and demons.[35]

It was thus possible to move from the festive to the demonic without any sense of elision. Towards the close of Nicolas Barnaud's great catalogue of France's vices and disorders, *Le Miroir des Francois* (1581), there is a chapter on games of chance which, after denouncing dicing and playing at cards, moves on to attack other popular

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[12] Peter Weidkuhn, 'Carnival in Basle: Playing History in Reverse', *Cultures,* 3 (1976), 34-5. For parallels between an Italian witchcraft deposition and carnival *diablerie,* sec Luisa Accati, 'The Spirit of Fornication: Virtue of the Soul and Virtue of the Body in Friuli, 1660-1800', in Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero (cds.), *Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective* (London, 1990), 122-4.

[33] Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization,* 65, see also 50; Burke and Caldwell (cds.), *Hogarth,* no. 42.

[34] Philip Stubbes, *The anatomic of abuses* (London, 1583), sigs. Mi'-Miv'.

[35] Jean Savaron, *Traitte contre les masques* (Paris, 1608), 3-4, 15-16 (quotation at 4); Claude Noirot, *L'Origine des masques, mommerie, bernez, et revennez ès jours gras de caresme prenant, menez sur lasne a rebours et charivary (\W)),* in C. Leber, J.-B. Salgues and J. Cohen (cds.), *Collection des meilleurs dissertations, notices et traitesparticuliers relatifs a Phistoire de France* (20 vols.; Pans, 1826-38), ix. 35-8; cf. Guillaume Paradin, *Le Mason des danses* (Beaujcu, 1556), 81-8, see also 5,8—10,53-7.

recreations, including mumming, masquerading, dancing, and music-making. Wedding festivities, saysBarnaud, must be forbidden, villagers should turn away the travelling players, dancers, and minstrels who arrive at festival time, and peasants ought not to cavort from village to village, or play skittles. Some seigneurs are as bad as their tenants, for they sell the rights to hold dances and games to their villagers. Then Bamaud continues without a break:

> Now if neither the one nor the other want to reform, they should at least remember that the infamous Herod had St John decapitated for his beautiful dancer's sake, and they should hold in horror the dances of the wizards and witches with Satan in the form of a goat at the diabolical synagogues, when faces are turned away from each other.

Bamaud's book has turned abruptly into a demonology. He goes on to give a traditional description of the witches' sabbat and attacks those who doubt its reality, citing all the while from *Malleus tnaleficarum* and other canonical authors like Lambert Daneau and Jean Bodin. Bamaud ends with an exhortation to the civil powers to emulate the magistrates of the Old Testament and rid France of all forms of magic.[36]

Even when the two subjects did not collapse into each other in this way, the same concepts and the same rhetoric are discernible in denunciations of popular festivals as in accounts of witchcraft. The devil, wrote the author of a *Traicte contre les bacchanales ou mardigras* (1582),

> is the father of lying and hypocrisy. Now what are masques and mummings but lying and hypocrisy? For he who carries a mask, not only by changing his speech but also the whole of his bodily costume as well as gestures and ordinary actions, wants others to believe that he is quite different from what he actually is, and what is that but to lie with all his person?

Masking, the writer complained, switched the polarities of male and female, age and youth, beauty and ugliness. Who could be the author of this 'reversal, alteration, and disguise' but the devil? Who invented mumming but Momus? The classical Bacchanalia and the contemporary Mardigras are here described and condemned in language identical to that which was currently being applied to the witches' sabbat.[37]

It was thus easy, indeed automatic, for social critics to detect demonism in festivals. But if, for their part, witchcraft authors had the more specific task of tracing a festive tradition for the sabbat, they nevertheless resorted to the same anthropology of inversion. If for Savaron the masquer was just another type of witch, then for Nicolas Remy, and for many other writers, the witch was only the latest in a line of disguisers. It was because witches wore masks, argued Remy, that the Lombards came to call them *masca'*. and it is from this that we derive our vernacular word 'Masquerader', applied to those who run masked about the streets in their Carnivals of pleasure'. What the disguise signified was that witchcraft was itself a 'mask', an arena of illusion, falseness, and the parodying of religious behaviour.[38] The usual argument was to derive the sabbat from (what were taken to be) the inversionary revels of the Saturnalian and Bacchanalian festivals of the ancients. As pattern-makers in this respect, both Johannes Nider and the authors of *Malleus maleficarum* suggested that witchcraft was timed to coincide with the most sacred moments of the church calendar because immoral and profane people had always infringed Christian festive norms. 'Pagans' had given over their New Year celebrations to revels in honour of Janus, who was in fact a devil, and, now, both bad Christians and witches imitated these ancient corruptions, the one group using them for lasciviousness and the other for spell-making.[3]' A hundred years later the idea was taken up by Pierre Crespet, Prior of the French Celestines, who located the witches' dance in a festive tradition that began with the Bacchanalian orgy, continued with early Christian transvestism, and culminated with the masquerades of the *Mâchecroûte* of contemporary Lyons.[40] Jude Serclier, canon of the Order of St Ruff, was another who thought in these terms, searching out originals for the sabbat in the Roman Calends and the festivals of Mars and Pallas.[41]

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[36] Nicolas Bamaud, *Le MiroirdesJrancois* (n.p., 1581), 488-93, quotation at 492.

[37] Anon., *Traicte contre les bacchanales ou mardigras, auquel tous chrestiens sont exhortez de s 'abstenir des banquets dudict mardigras, et des masques et mommeries* (n.p., 1582), 50, 52, see also 6-7,42-3. The tract is sometimes ascribed to Lambert Daneau, in which case we are reading a witchcraft author too. But it was based on an earlier Latin work by the Marburg theologian Andreas Gerhard [Hyperius], *Deferiis Bacchanalibus quodque apud Cristianos locum habere nullo modo debeant,* in id., *Varia opuscula theologica* (Basel, 1570), 966–98.

Crespet's most striking claim—that the Bacchanalia and the sabbat were in fact one rite—was elaborated in some detail by two other Frenchmen, the collector of *histoires tragiques,* Francois de Rosset, and Francois Hédelin, abbé d'Aubignac. Each claimed that the tw'o festivals were presided over by the same figure, 'Bacchus' being really a devil, in the same form, the form of the goat. They were attended by the same celebrants, 'satyrs' and 'maenads', again, being really devils and the ancient participants being really witches. The ceremonies and orgies, the music and dancing, even the cries and shouts of the revellers were identical, continuity being guaranteed by demonic transmission down the ages. In the context of one of his 'tragical histories', the trial and execution of the priest Louis Gaufridy in 1611 (he was accused of demonism and enticing nuns into witchcraft), Rosset wrote that 'the Orgies of Bacchus were nothing else but what is called today "Sabbat" '. For Hédelin, likewise, they were 'the same thing' as the night conventicles of contemporary French witches, where only those who had made a pact with the devil were admitted.[42]

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” Remy,*Demonolatry,* 63,32.

[n] [Heinrich Kramer (Institoris) and Jakob Sprcngcr], *Malleus maleficarum,* cd. and trans. Nl. Summers (London, 1928; repr. 1948), 257-8, all further references arc to this cdn. unless otherwise indicated; cf. Johannes Nider, *Praeceptorium legis site exposilio decalogi* (Nuremberg, 1496), sigs. c6'-c7^r (written r.l44°).

[40] Pierre Crespet, *Deux Livres de la hayne de Sathan et maltns esprits contre l homme, et de l homme contre eux* (Paris, 1590), 246—55; cf. Pierre Masse, *De l'imposture et tromperie des diables, devins, enchanteurs, sorciers, noueurs d'esguillettes, chevilleurs, necromanciens, chiromanciens et autres quipar telle invocation diabolique, ars magiques et superstitions abusent lepeuple* (Paris, 1579), fo. 101*.

[41] Jude Serclier, *L'Antidemon historial, ou les sacrileges, larcins, ruses, etfraudes du Prince des tenebres, pour usurper la divinite, sont amplement traictez* (Lyons, 1609), 326-53; cf. Rene Benoist, *Petit fragment catechist ic dune plus ample catechese de la magie reprehensible et des magiciens (\519),* in Masse, *De l imposture, 20-6; Rémy, Demonolatry, (A', Boucher, Couronne mystique, 592-3.*

[42] Francois de Rosset, *Les Histoires tragiques de nostre temps,* 2nd edn. (Paris, 1615), 51-2, see also 84—3;

In early modem culture, then, and particularly in France, festivals and sabbats shared (or were seen to share) the same specific inversions. But even without this, they would still have been equally dependent on inversion itself as a symbolic form. Substantive links apart, they were shaped alike by the inversionary principle; they were structurally equivalent, parallel manifestations of the same cultural pattern.[43] In interpreting witchcraft beliefs, we should, therefore, be responsive to the broader questions that continue to be asked about misrule wherever it occurs in ritual settings.

Attention has concentrated partly on the instrumental benefits accruing to communities from what is actually done at times of ritual licence. But there are contrasting views about what this social utility amounts to. On the one hand, it is said that traditional institutions and values are reaffirmed—for example, by the mockery of offenders against social codes, the deflation of pretentious wisdom or overweening authority, or simply the open expression of grudges borne against neighbours. In this fashion, misrule strengthens the community by symbolic or open criticism and its moderating influence; in Victor Turner's formulation, it brings 'social structure and communitas into right mutual relation once again'. At the end of its strictly regulated duration, complete normality reassuringly returns.[44] Alternatively, the same carnivalesque practices have been associated with innovation and protest because they offer freedom to explore relationships and meanings potentially corrosive of existing structures and, therefore, not usually tolerated. Like laughter itself, they work to loosen and undermine social traditions, weakening the community's normative hold over its members by offering them the periodic liberation of more 'open' experiences. C. L. Barber, for example, spoke aptly of the way 'the instability of an interregnum' was built into the dynamics of misrule; seasonal play, he wrote, 'at once appropriates and annihilates the mana of authority.' In cruder terms, *Fastnaclit* has been described rfk a 'savage form of class struggle'.[45] The radicalism that led eighteenth-century French writers and artists to the creative freedoms of symbolic negativity—Walter Rex has called this 'the attraction of the contrary'—falls into the same category.[46] But that inversion may mean subversion, especially in popular hands, is a view inspired mainly by the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, and his is now the

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!■ ran^ois Hcdelin [Abbe d Aubignac], *Des Salyres brutes, monstres et demons, De leur nature et adoration* (Paris, 1627), 124-32.

” Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy,* 6.

“ Thomas, *Rule and Misrule,* 33-4; Wclsford, *The Fool,* 317; Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy,* 245; Charles Phythian-Adams, 'Ceremony and the Citizen: The Communal Year at Coventry', in Peter Clark and Paul Slack (eds.), *Crisis and Order in English Towns, 1500-1700* (London, 1972), 68-9. The fullest treatments have come from anthropologists; see esp. Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (London, 1969), 166-203 (quotation at 178).

” Barber,Shakespeare's Festive Comedy, 38, see also 29,213-14; Weidkuhn, 'Carnival in Basle', 43-4, and *passim* for the rebellious nature of carnival. Cf. id., 'Fastnacht—Revolte—Revolution', *Zeitschriftfiir Religions- und Geistesgeschichte,* 21 (1969), 189-306. By 'savage' Weidkuhn means both pre-modern and originating in the underprivileged classes.

[46] Walter E. Rex, *The Attraction of the Contrary: Essays on the Literature of the French Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1987),^anim.

usual one.[47] It receives support from the many instances in early modern Europe—the uprising at Romans in 1579—80 being the most striking—when riots and revolts grew out of festive occasions or used them as vehicles for expressing protest, all the while borrowing directly, like social saturnalia, from their rich inversionary symbolism.[48]

If we were to pause here and try to reconcile these two readings of ritual inversion, we might reasonably agree that misrule was an ambivalent cultural form that was normally integrative but always contained the potential to disrupt, especially when circumstances rendered the structures of authority unstable and vulnerable to challenge. It is a feature of traditional, hierarchical societies that protest in them, precisely because it relies so heavily on temporary inversion, usually falls short of truly revolutionary, that is to say, transformative, action. But stopping at this point is not, in fact, at all helpful. It restricts us to questions about the social functions of actual behaviour, functions which, although they have often been seen as latent in that behaviour, do nevertheless require some attribution of intentions to agents—to those who presumably knew and experienced saturnalian rituals. And this presents the historian of witchcraft with an insurmountable problem. For to ask the same questions about witchcraft would mean tracing the intentions not of the writers who described sabbats but of the witches who allegedly attended them. With regard to the first reading, therefore, we would be re-committed to something like Margaret Murray's celebrated but now discredited theory that Renaissance witchcraft consisted of rites of inversion actually performed by folk worshippers of a surviving Dianic fertility cult.[49] A reading of the second type, on the other hand, would involve us accepting the connections that Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie once claimed existed between conceptions of revolt based on a 'fantasy of inversion' shared by rural peasant insurrectionists, festival fools, and witches in southern France at the end of the sixteenth century. This is an even less plausible idea, reminiscent of the romanticism of Michelet. For although there evidently was a structural kinship between ideas of revolt, folly, and witchcraft, we cannot say that it entered the heads of *witches* and informed their actions at the sabbat. This is because the accredited historical evidence for the latter comes either from allegations or from stereotyped, and often forced, confessions. We simply do not have grounds for attributing festive witches with intentions of any kind, whether integrative or innovative in character.[50]

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[47] Bakhtin, *Rabelais,* 74-83,273-7, and *passim',* Davis, *Society and Culture,* 103,122-3, 130—51; Bristol, *Carnival and Theater, passim.* Cf. Billington, Alodr *Kings,* 6, who says that 'electing a mock king was inherently questioning and subversive'.

[41] The literature is now very extensive indeed. Some main items are Bcrce, Fr/e ef *revolte,* 55-92; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Carnival: A People's Uprising at Romans, 1579-1580,* trans. Mary Feeney (London, 1980), esp. 95-101, 175-228, 295-8, 305-24; David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660* (Oxford, 1985); Billington, *Mock Kings,* 9—29. For Swiss examples, sec Weidkuhn, 'Carnival in Basle', 39-43, and for some well-documented English cases, A. W. Smith, 'Some Folklore Elements in Movements of Social Protest', *Folklore,* 77 (1966-67), 241-52, and Ingram, 'Ridings, Rough Music and the "Reform of Popular Culture" *,91.

[49] M. A.Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe: A Study in Anthropology* (Oxford, *V)2V),passim,* esp. 124-85. Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* (London, 1975), 107-15, summarizes the main arguments against Murray. For Carlo Ginzburg's disclaimers regarding the support supposedly given to Murray's views by his work on the *benandanti,* see his *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* trans. John and AnncTcdeschi (London, 1983), pp. xiii-xiv, xix-xx.

There is, however, a second set of issues relating to misrule, where what is important is not so much its social as its cognitive impact—the ‘knowing’ of it rather than the ‘doing’. Admittedly, this is only an analytical distinction, but it does help to bring out the representational aspects of witchcraft beliefs. Before inverted behaviour could have any instrumental or social-functional use, it had to be recognized *as* inversionary, even if this recognition had its own utility—its heuristic function, so to speak. Here, the subject of festivity could play ‘a structural, metaphorical or symbolic role’.[51] What, then, were the conditions that had to obtain for ritual misrule to mean something? Here, the transfer to witchcraft is a possible one, provided we restrict ourselves to *notions* of witchcraft and concentrate on their basis in language and their reliance on classifications. We can certainly ask questions of the inscribers of sabbat rituals even if we cannot ask them of the performers. How, therefore, did they ‘know’ witchcraft; how did they ‘think’ it?

The starting-point here must obviously be the fact that, by definition, misrule presupposes the rule that it parodies; as Barber again put it, ‘license depends utterly upon what it mocks’. This is a point not just about the temporariness of festive inversion but about its intelligibility. The negation celebrated by Bakhtin was not mere nothingness but the inside-out or upside-down of what was being denied.[52] The fool could only flourish, in fact or in literary imaginations, in societies where the taboos surrounding divine kingship and sacramental worship were especially rigid. ‘Since rule and rulers were fundamental to the cosmic scheme then, necessarily, misrule and mock rulers also had their place.’[53] The street theatre and cacophonous ‘rough’ music of the charivari were effective precisely because other ceremonial occasions were solemn; they represented, it has been said, ‘an inversion in the sphere of sound’.[54] Turning social or sexual status upside-down, and the laughter or anxiety it provoked, only began to make sense in a world of simply polarized, and thus ‘role-reversible’ hierarchies.[55] In every case, there was a necessary oppositional symmetry between orthodoxy and its inversion. And whether, and to what degree, misrule and masquerade were meaningful depended on familiarity with this relationship.

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[50] Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Les Paysans de Languedoc* (2 vols.; Paris, 1966), i. 407-14; cf. Robert *Muchembled, Sorcieres, justice et societe aux I fret 17'siecles* (Paris, 1987), 49-50. For criticism of Ladurie on this matter, see Quentin Skinner, ‘A Reply to my Critics’, in James Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics* (Princeton, 1988), 242-3. In other respects, Ladurie’s treatment of inversion as a cultural idiom and his references to inversions common to festive and demonic behaviour have been particularly helpful to me.

[51] Laroque, *Shakespeare's Festive World,* 5.

[52] Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy,* 214; Bakhtin, *Rabelais,* 11,370,410-15.

[53] Billington, *Mock Kings,* 3. [54] Marcel-Dubois, ‘Fetes villageoises’, 607.

[55] Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy,* 213-14, see also 10; Welsford, *The Fool,* 193; Davis, *Society and Culture,* 100; Thompson, ‘“Rough Music”: Le Charivari anglais’, 289; Thomas, *Rule and Misrule,* 34; K. V. Thomas, ‘The Place of Laughter in Tudor and Stuart England’, *Times Literary Supplement,* 21 Jan. 1977, 77-81; Bristol, *Carnival and Theater*, 125-9.

An example from modern anthropology is McKim Marriott's failure to comprehend the Indian village festival of Holi as an actor but his subsequent understanding that its apparent disorder was 'an order precisely inverse to the social and ritual principles of routine life'. This enabled him to read each detail of the festival accurately as implying 'some opposite positive rule or fact of every day social organisation in the village'.[56] This was the kind of reading required of those who, in Rouen in 1540, witnessed the banquet of the Abbey of Misrule, during which one of the 'Conards' recited from Rabelais instead of from the Bible; or of those who saw the 'skimmington' at Quemerford in Wiltshire in 1618, when the victim was substituted by 'a man riding upon a horse, having a white night cap upon his head, two shoeing horns hanging by his ears, a counterfeit beard upon his chin made of a deer's tail, a smock upon the top of his garments... with a pair of pots under him'; or of those who watched 'La Fête de Châteauvieux', a demonstration in Paris in 1792 which, through deliberate contrariety, symbolized the social values of the Revolution by being performed 'precisely in the way traditional processions of the *ancien régime* were not'.[57]

We can now revert to the category of purpose and ask what were the uses of these conditions of intelligibility to those whose thinking they informed. And, as before, there are two responses, one stressing integration, familiarization, and control, the other corrosion and disruption. The first view is that, simply in obliging spectators to see the conventional world and its sign-systems in the guise of their opposites, misrule embodies a cognitive function that is essentially conservative—it reaffirms the normal from a 'ritual viewpoint'. 'Cognitively', observes Turner, 'nothing underlines regularity so well as absurdity or paradox.'[58] Somewhat stronger is the claim that only by exploring this contrary perspective can men and women make themselves conceptually at home in a world of relatively unchanging polarities. In the celebration of the negative, it has been said, there lies a clarification of the positive. By temporarily collapsing structure, the masquerade 'intensified awareness of the structure being violated' and was thus a vehicle of comic enlightenment.[59]

On the other hand, ritual inversion also opens up a potentially crucial gap between orthodoxy as given and orthodoxy as made—between something presented as natural, essential, and axiomatic, and something represented as cultural, artificial, and open to question. However slight the gap, however extravagant or absurd the inversion, this is a step towards the relativizing of categories and the exposure—one might even say the betrayal—of their arbitrary nature. For Bakhtin the carnivalesque is defined by a 'sense of the gay relativity of prevailing truths and authorities'.[60] Festivals of inversion play with hierarchical polarities—high and low, wise and foolish, male and female, rulers and ruled. And the very fact that they do this may suggest to participants that these oppositions lack the objective, unchanging reality and hierarchical valencies normatively claimed for them. Thus inversion can have an estranging as well as a clarifying role; it unsettles the very classification system that gives it meaning and it does so in the same instant that that meaning is grasped. This is the reason why it has continued to attract attention from those who, like Michael Bristol, Terry Castle, and Walter Rex, are interested in the elements of resistance and breakdown in the apparently stable interpretative communities of early modern Europe.[61]

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[56] Cited by Turner, *Ritual Process,* 185-6. Cf. Charles Stewart, *Demons and the Devil: Moral Imagination in Modern Greek Culture* (Princeton, 1991), 8-16,98-9,244-9, whose account of the place of *la exotika* (spirits of the wild) in the demonology of the modern Greek Orthodox Church exactly parallels my interpretation of the place of witches in early modern religious orthodoxy.

[57] Grinberg, 'Carnaval et société urbaine', 552; Ingram, 'Ridings, Rough Music and the "Reform of Popular Culture" ', 82; Rex, *Attraction of the Contrary,* 10-12. On the meaning of the 'Conards' (or 'Comards') of Rouen, see Davis, *Society and Culture,* 99, and on their festivals, Claude Gaignebet, 'Le Cycle annuel des fêtes à Rouen au milieu du xvie siècle', in Jacquot and Konigson (eds.), *Fêtes de la Renaissance,* iii. 569-78.

[58] *Turner, Ritual Process, 176.*

[59] Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization,* 87—88; cf. Turner, *Ritual Process,* 176,200-1; Max Gluckman, 'Rituals of Rebellion in South-East Africa', in id., *Order and Rebellion in Tribal Africa* (London, 1963), 110-36; Max Gluckman, *Custom and Conflict in Africa* (Oxford, 1956), 109-36. Barber's formula for the saturnalian patterns in popular festivals and Shakespearian comedy was: 'through release to clarification'; see *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy.* 3-4,8, see also 245.

In trying to reconcile these further viewpoints, we might suggest again that the semantic and representational systems governing misrule were, for the most part, successful in containing, as well as authorizing, its meanings, and that they normally thrived on the clarification achieved (in Barber's terms) through saturnalian release. Containment was naturally more difficult whenever these systems were themselves insecure, and this meant that inversion was cognitively benign at some historical moments and disruptive at others. On the other hand, do we need to reconcile the arguments at all? The forces of integration and disintegration that were simultaneously at work whenever contemporaries made sense of inversion ought, perhaps, to be left unresolved, in a state of permanent tension.[62] A cultural form whose conditions of intelligibility were both reinforced and undermined each time it was construed was at best ambivalent, and probably downright paradoxical. This could be the reason for the vitality and longevity of inversionary festivals, as well as the great suspicion with which they were regarded by the guardians of absolute meanings.

* * *

We can now better appreciate the last and deepest ambivalence in Baldung's 1514 drawing. For, ultimately, its theme was the power to represent, as well as the ability to understand, one thing as the inverse of another. Witchcraft beliefs, because they too were dependent on the inversionary principle, exhibited both sides of that principle's contradictory nature. In early modern Europe, witchcraft was thought to have an objective existence with all the certainty that any knowledge system can convey. We should not underestimate the convictions of those who believed in its very possibility. Its inversionary patterns, likewise, were accepted as objectively present in

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“ Bakhtin *Rabelais,* 11, see also 34, 39, 82. Similarly, Watson, 'Erasmus[1] *Praise ofFolly* 342-53, stresses the relativizing use of folly by Erasmus.

[61] Sec, in particular, Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization,* 88, citing Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts ofPollution and Taboo* (London, 1966), 169-70, on the demystifying powers of rituals that allow a social group to 'turn round and confront the categories on which their whole surrounding culture has been built up'.

[62] For an exactly comparable instance from anthropolog)', sec Lambck, *Human Spirits,* 183, on the tension in trance states between acceptance and rejection of the conventional order[1].

concrete practices. They were traced (plausibly, as we shall see) to witchcraft's foundation in a rebellious and parodying demonism—a demonic form of misrule. Here lay the integrating, familiarizing, and, in the end, conserving, features of ‘knowing’ witches. No doubt witchcraft became a target of special hatred precisely because Christians could recognize so much of themselves in this particular kind of otherness.[63] But men and women were also reassured to find so many of their codes and institutions mimicked at the sabbat. Fidelity was thus an important matter; the closer the fit, the more there was to learn. The minuteness of the detail and the exactness of the inversions were thus vital aspects of witchcraft depictions. In all these ways, demonology was a powerful resource of early modern orthodoxy. It had the conservative effect of constructing and maintaining norms by portraying them in their demonic opposites. Like the masquerade, it ‘made hierarchies explicit by dramatically suspending them’; while it may not have been comic, it was certainly enlightening.[64] And it derived its persuasiveness as much from the strength of this logical tactic as from the importance of the ideological interests it served.

But there is, in the same moment, a feeling of disruption and vulnerability too. The closer the fit, the more witchcraft's supposedly objective existence was liable to become unstable. To portray witchcraft not as an approximate, but a *perfect* inversion of the normal world—as the gaze of Baldung's upside-down witch does—was to relativize it so tightly to that world that its status as an objective event could become suspect. Witchcraft was undoubtedly an inversion, but Baldung (perhaps the first major artist to confront the subject) prompts his contemporaries (and us) to ask whether it was anything more than this. As we look at the drawing, the doubt arises that, far from acting on the world in parodic imitation of it, witches were its creation—fashioned by a system of representational practices based on inversion, of which the images of the artist, like the revels and jokes of the fool and the costumes of the disguised, were, precisely because of their artificiality, tell-tale signs. Even as they described witchcraft as an objective reality, authors subverted their own descriptions by encouraging the view that witchcraft was a made reality—a product of their logic, as well as its subject. The central paradox lay in the very authenticity of their accounts; the more faithful they were, the less credible they became. Success and failure were somehow simultaneous. Here is a version of the gap I mentioned a moment ago; an interval between depictions of witchcraft and the acceptance of them as depictions of something real that (as we shall also see) sceptics at the time could occupy and exploit.

These ambivalences and contradictions ought not to be over-dramatized or over-interpreted; they should, perhaps, be sensed rather than continually confronted. For the most part, they remained latent and the dangers of relativism were not perceived. It is easy to be anachronistic when looking for incoherencies in language-games. Writers on these subjects often argued that demons and witches were required to complete the Christian world order, but they cannot be expected, without absurdity,

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[61] Bossy, *Christianity,* 76.

[64] Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization,* 87,

to have seen this as a requirement of demonology itself, and of its representational system, even if they occasionally appear to hover uneasily on this particular brink. Our main task in what follows, therefore, will be to see how conceptual strategies associated with opposition and inversion enabled intellectuals to make sense of the demonic and use it as a resource. On the other hand, there is no cause for celebration either; no language-game escapes a degree of incoherence or transcends change. We will need to remember, as we go along, that the very same strategies that gave witchcraft meaning also made it problematic. In the end, this was crucial for the decline of witchcraft beliefs. Resilient in the face of external attack, they succumbed to the kind of internal, structural instability I have been alluding to; they defeated themselves. Like demonology itself, then, we must hover. Without siding with the relativizers and sceptics we must recognize that behind the early modern belief in witchcraft lay the workings of a system of representation; and without siding with the believers we must acknowledge that what was represented was nevertheless thought to be real.

3

Dual Classification

> All things are double one against another: and hee hath made nothing unperfit.
>
> (Ecclesiasticus 42:24)

> Two things that are opposed, inverse, or contrary have the peculiar characteristic of presenting a difference that consists in their very likeness, or if one prefers, a likeness that consists in the greatest possible difference.
>
> (Jean Gabriel de Tarde, *L'Opposition universelle: essai d'une theorie des contraires)*

How did witchcraft make sense among the literate classes of early modern Europe? Or, as it has sometimes been put, how was this particular representation collectively organized for them? I have argued that what was expected of readers of demonology was often similar in substance, and always identical in form, to what was expected of spectators of festive misrule (and that much the same demands are also made of the cultural historian looking back on these matters). What was required was an act of recognition with three distinguishable elements: first, a general awareness of the logical relation of opposition, without which inversion could not even be entertained; secondly, a familiarity with the particular symbolic systems that made it possible to interpret the actions of demons and witches as inversions; and thirdly, the grasping of just what positive rule or order was implied by any individual inversion that they (allegedly) committed. Outside this cognitive framework, the antics of witches, like those of the lay brothers of Antibes in 1645 or the monks of Rabelais's Abbaye de Théleme, would have seemed so much nonsense. Exploring it will show how the learned conception of witchcraft meant something—and how it eventually became problematic. This is what is attempted in this and the following three chapters.

Misrule involved the exchanging of roles or qualities that were themselves opposites or could be reduced to opposites. In the first instance, therefore, its impact depended on what it meant, for example, for wisdom to be opposite to folly, male to female, or Lent to Carnival. The scope for pairings of this kind and, thus, the cultural challenge to interpret them, were both evidently considerable. A single charivari expressed manifold polarities.[1] Just one of its ritual elements—its counter-music—belonged (it has been said) to 'a system of representations in terms of pairs of opposed categories: melodic patterns/regular repeated sounds; tonal harmony/vivid noises;

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[1] Ingram, 'Ridings, Rough Music and the "Reform of Popular Culture" ', 98-9, lists the polarities of order/disorder, dominance/subjection, harmony/disharmony, malc/female, human/animal, purity/filth, hidden/manifest, and private/public.

music/racket (*vacarme*).'[2] Masqueraders exploited so many of eighteenth-century England's oppositions, collapsing them in the process, that they threatened the very logic of categorical opposition itself. 'The ""8ories »f d<""inatiTM':wri,K T;7 Castle, 'folded endlessly into the categories of powerlessness, and vice versa. The venerated topoi of eighteenth-century culture (humanity, ^hnity, adulthood, nobility, rationality) merged with their despised opposites (the bestial, effeminacy, childishness, servility, madness)." The cult of folly in early modem Europe embodied a 'polarization of experience', while Lent and Carnival argued dialectically over 'a number of simple binary oppositions—fat and thin, butcher and fishmonger, beef and herring, colourful clothing and black clothing'.[4] In 1522 the citizens of Berne celebrated *Faslnacht* with a procession (devised by Niklaus Manuel) in which Christ rode down one side of the street, dressed in grey, mounted on an ass, and followed by a crowd of poor, blind, and lepers, and the Pope (i.e. the Antichrist) rode down the opposite side, dressed for war, mounted on horseback, and followed by an army and by the hierarchy of his church.[5] And when Elizabeth I entered London for her coronation in January 1559 she processed between two pageant 'mountains', one representing the commonwealth ruined and decayed and the other its prosperous counterpart.[6] Yet, despite their diversity, all these social phenomena were ordered by one relational concept, and their interpretation by one kind of thinking. If this was also the logic presupposed by demonology, we must concentrate first on opposition itself and its role in early modem culture.

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For the most part, this will be a matter of historical ethnography—of showing what contemporaries did with oppositions and what value they placed on them. But there are also some conceptual issues to be raised first. To begin with, there is the question of whether the subject has a history at all. There seems to be an elementary sense in which our thinking and acting always depend on the relationship of opposition, such that understanding an idea or a mode of conduct relies on our grasp of its opposite. The Aristotelian maxim *contrariorum eadem est doctrina* expresses this, as does Kant's dictum that 'all *a priori* division of concepts must be by dichotomy'.[7] This is perhaps the reason why discussions of the formal oppositions holding between terms or propositions changed very little between Aristotle's *De interpretation* and C. K. Ogden s *Opposition* (1932). It has also become commonplace to argue that judgements of opposition are linked to the universal formal properties of language. Whether semantic or phonemic, linguistic units signify not because of any positive features we isolate in them but because they differ from other units in the same language. It is true that relationships of difference are not necessarily relationships of opposition; they serve to distinguish not only between each unit and its near neighbours but between it and all the others. Nevertheless, opposition is, according to one of its foremost analysts, Rodney Needham, 'one of a severely limited number of formal relations by which semantic units ... are articulated', and binary oppositions in particular (for example, between vowels and consonants) are taken to be decisive in the recognition of the various phonological elements of verbal signs. For Needham, in addition, binary opposition is one of the 'primary factors' of all human consciousness and culture. 'Social forms', he has argued, 'are universally determined by a restricted number of relational factors that express logical constraints and alternatives.' Such factors act subliminally; they are intrinsic to human nature. They are, therefore, the essential constituents of all experience, the 'ultimate predicates in whatever men [choose] to say about themselves and the world'.[8] From here it is not far to the full Levi-Straussian claim that binary difference is the basis of all other kinds of relation, expressing as it does a universal law that regulates the workings of human brains. At this point, we arrive at a version of natural determinism that makes all cultural history redundant, not merely the history of the oppositional thinking that was local to early modern Europe.

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[2] Marcel-Dubois, 'Fetes vilhgeoises', 605, sec also 615.

[2] Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization*^.

B ***ea 's Festi***

[3] rlrber:5?a^n " W,Come^ 5; Bristol, *Carnival and Theater* 78 Conrad-Andre Beerli, Quelques aspects des ieux fetes .rd.n. A'D moitie du xvf siecle', in Jean Jacquot (ed.) *Let Fitei l'a* **de** **Ren** dans * P*171' Pcndlnt la premiere example from Antwerp in 1561,seeBerce *Fite et rfvolte* 64 aWan"1 ^Paris>l9S6). 364. Forasimilar

[6] **John Nichols (ed.), *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth* (3 vols.; London, 1823), i. 49–50.**

[7] **Thomas Wilson, *The rule of reason, conteinyng the art of* *ogike* (London,** lS51)> siss' Piv'"Pv'] Immanuel Kant, *Criiiqut* ***of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman** Kemt/snOh Kemp Sm,lh (London, 1964), 116 (cited by Needham,seen. 10below,219).

We can scarcely ignore these ideas, so important.have they been for both the structuralists who (in the main) originally proposed them and for those who have more recently sought their subversion. But they are forced on us in any case, since Needham illustrates the working of his primary factors by arguing that, in combination, they organize the cluster of ideas and symbolisms that, in all places and times, constitute the notion of witchcraft and convey its meaning. As he puts it, the image of the witch 'condenses' primary factors. Witches are always characterized and, hence, experienced in terms of a limited number of features. Morally, they are classified by strict polar opposition from what is right; physically, by the spatial metaphor of inversion. Added to these basic factorial properties are perceptual contrasts between night and day, black and white, associated types of animals, and so on. These various elements are not peculiar to the representation of witches, and they are subject to much local variation. Nevertheless, the human imagination resorts constantly to the same limited repertoire of devices for structuring this particular image. The result is that all cultures have known witchcraft as a synthetic complex of the same primary factors. The complex is, in fact, autonomous, 'and men have merely altered its particulars according to their circumstances'.[9]

There is much that is helpful in this argument, in particular the way it treats the facts of witchcraft as facts about the way it is represented, rather than as social or psychological realities to which it may be reduced. Tracing the forms of this representation—its tropology, so to speak—should, if the argument is followed through, replace the pursuit of causes as the central task of analysis. The trouble is that Needham, like many structuralist anthropologists, sees these forms not as cultural but as natural products—in fact, as the necessary consequences of natural constants in the way Ae human mind works. Causality is not, therefore, abandoned after ail. We can protest that this robs individual notions of witchcraft of precisely what is historically interesting about them-their specificity and their capacity for change^ To than the reply is that a broad division of labour separates the comparativist who wishes to operate on a global scale from the historian who does not. We might go on to deny that formal entities like opposition and inversion arise from nature at all. For if they do not, there is no reason to suppose that they exist independently of any given expression of what they mean. But one of the reasons that is still given for the extraordinary diffusion of binary systems of thought and action is that certain essential conditions of human natural existence (like light and dark, male and female, and life and death) *do* present themselves physically as pairs to the signifying systems that turn them into opposites.[10] The philosophical debate about whether, or to what extent, language has some natural basis (either in the physical make-up of the world or in the organizing power of the mind) is of enormous range and complexity, and this is not the place to explore it. Perhaps the best working compromise for the historian is to accept that, whatever natural components there may be in thought patterns, they can never manifest themselves or be identified outside the realm of semantic values—values which, because they are subject to so much that is arbitrary and shifting, must yield significantly different meanings in different linguistic contexts. Of difference there can, and must, be histories. What, therefore, opposition has meant in particular cultures, as opposed to what it may or may not *be,* remains to be discovered.

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[8] Needham, *Primordial Characters*^ 15,17,20.

[9] Ibid. 42, and 23 *S^passun.*

A considerable part of the problem is Needham's hostility to the idea (which he calls 'intellectualism') that conscious thought has anything important to do with how the world is classified and experienced in individual cultural settings. He prefers to identify not the conferred but the instrinsic properties of social facts; he is, it seems, a (cognitive) realist. He argues, for example, that the institutions of totemism cannot be interpreted in terms of the rationality of totemic peoples, since there is 'no good evidence that they cogitate or otherwise act intellectually (that is, "think") by means of the distinct ions and correlations of their totemic categories.'[11] But whatever the case with t [illegible] this is pal[illegible]abl[illegible] true [illegible] binary [illegible] ization in Western culture. Here, there is not merely good but overwhelming evidence that some intellectual conditions have positively encouraged oppositional thinking and the patterning of utterances and actions appropriate to it. It has therefore flourished^ some cognitive environments, while other kinds of thinking have not. This, as Geoffrey Lloyd has recently re-emphasized in the case of right/left distinctions, has vital implications for the way we look at the constitution of meaning and intelligibility in such environments. The aim, Lloyd says, is not to uncover universal properties of thought or language but to 'study how the human imagination puts to use what it represents as given distinctions in different ways and for different purposes, how it converts what is socially and culturally mediated and determined into what it accepts as natural and again how it may (though only may) become self-conscious of its very doing so'.[12]

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[10] On the 'twoness' of ph[illegible]sical r[illegible]y, see, for example, H*llpike, *The Foundatioiu of Primitive Thought* (Oxford, 1979), 224^35; G^R. Lloyd *PoMHiv C/i* [illegible]&y: *Two Types of Argumentation in Early Greek Thought* (Cambridge, 1966) 38-41, 46-7 Th™ [illegible] a [illegible] discussed by Rodney Needham, *Counterpoints* (London, 1987), 200-21, who concludes that duality is a mental construction put upon thc phenomena in question.

[11] Needham, *Primordial Characters.* 51-2.

The cosmology of the early Greeks, for example, led to the dominance of what Hermann Fränkel called a 'polar mode of thought' after Homer and what Lloyd himself has presented as the widespread use of opposites throughout Greek thought.[13] Prominent in the science of antiquity, according to E. J. Dijksterhuis, was the 'typical Hellenic habit of thinking in axiological antitheses, of always wanting to decide which of two comparable activities, properties, or qualities is the higher, the better, the nobler, or the more perfect'.[14] Patristic and medieval Christianity was likewise preoccupied with dualistic themes in its theology, moral philosophy, and historiography, even if the 'birth' of Purgatory involved a 'general shift from binary to ternary logical schemes'.[15] In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries themselves (as we shall see), inheritances from the past and contemporary developments in linguistic taste and religious sensibilities disposed educated Europeans to see things in terms of binary opposition on such a scale that we may think of this as one of the distinctive mental and cultural traits of the age. Renaissance thought is aptly said to have been captive to 'habitual magnetic poles'.[16]

From the eighteenth century onwards, on the other hand, intellectual trends were more hostile to polarity. Reversing contraries continued for a while to be an attractive strategy in subversive modes of art, literature, and entertainment. The masquerade, according to its most recent historian, was thought to be dangerous as long as 'the conceptual world of English society was founded on certain hypostatized binary pairs, or symbolic contraries.' But by the 1790s it was moribund, made obsolete by the taxonomic sharpness and rational individualism promoted by new philosophies and new models of consciousness and society.[17] Of course, polarity has often been traced in modern culture too, particularly in its covert influence on ons of gender.[18] But it is one thing to uncover it by critical analysis in a number of Xante intexts, and another to find it insisted upon as . cosmological and cognt- .wX of universal application, as was the case in early modern Europe. In Z rcspecHt has been said that modern societies are at the 'weaker end of the continuum concerning the use of polarity in thought and action; they Much some importance to binary distinctions, such as the opposition of male and female, but do not link these distinctions to other oppositions at the systemic level in a dualistic ideology'.[19] We would not expect this exaggerated 'oppositionalism (as well as what Dijksterhuis called 'axiologism') to have survived the upheavals of the Enlightenment (even without accepting the dubious evolutionism that requires modern science and technology to have transcended primitive dualism). With major changes in styles of discourse and argument, the dying away of acute religious factionalism, and the weakening of entire intellectual traditions like medieval cosmology and Neoplatonism, binary thinking lost its purchase on European culture.[20] Rationalism and positivism have organized the modern experience *sub specie quantitatis*\ and quantity is not a category that is subject to relations of opposition.

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[12] G. E. R. Lloyd, Afr/AorA *and Problems in Greek Science* (Cambridge, 1991), 32; cf. the contributions to David Maybury-Lcwis and Uri Almagor (cds.), *The Attraction of Opposites: Thought and Society in a Dualistic Mode* (Ann Arbor, 1989), who ask (p. 12) 'why do some societies pay little attention to... binary systems of thought and action while others insist on them as the framework of their existence?*

[12] H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophic des friihen Griechentums* (New York, 1951), 77, sec also 341, 465; Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy,* 15-171.

[14] E.J. Dijksterhuis, *The Mechanization of the World Picture,* trans. C. Dikshoorn (Oxford, 1961), 75-8 (quotation at 75-6).

[15] Jacques Lc Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory,* trans. Arthur Goldhammer (London, 1984), 221; see also 1—14,209—27, for general endorsement of the kind of history of mental structures that I am proposing in the case of witchcraft. Cf. Georges Duby, *Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined* trans. Arthur Goldhammer (London, 1980), 81-109, on medievarternarity*.

[16] Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge, 1980), 26.

[17] Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization,* 78,98—106; cf. Rex, *Attraction of the Contrary, passim.*

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It is possible, then, to write the history of opposition—despite, rather than because of, some of the classic tenets of structuralism and similar theories about mental proclivities. It is possible, too, to attribute the European era when witchcraft beliefs were most diffused, and the prosecution of witches most vigorous, with an especial sensitivity to the idea of opposition. But this involves looking more closely at the culturally particular forms that it then took; and here some further preliminary complexities have to be considered. In Needham's later study of the concept, *Counterpoints,* opposition turns out to be a far from simple concept having an intrinsic logical form and a single set of essential features. It breaks down into things like polarity, duality, antithesis, and contrariety, each of them modes of contrast with different properties, none of which can be said to be distinctively oppositional. Its use to denote cultural forms may thus lack the clarity and integrity required of strict analysis, and rest on tropological suggestion rather than logical rigour. 'The concept', he concludes, 'is not formal but metaphorical; the metaphor represents an image; and the image is the product of a vectorial intuition of relative locations in space.'[21]

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[18] ^e, for example, Joan Wallach Scott, Grm/rr an///Ae Po/i7r«o/7/Mfi (New York 1988) 43

[19] David Maybury-Lewis, 'The Quest for Harmony', in Maybury-Lewis and Almagor (eds.), *Attraction of Opposites*, 2.

[20] For a different view, emphasizing the hardening the 1 the polarity »h'c applied to gender, see L. J. Jordanova, 'Natural S-A H C- o f storica -iv-e/evtai. Sexuality', in Carol MacCormack and Marilyn Strathem (eds) AS! ure r 1 Pcrspe c''ve on Science and 1980), 42-69. What I describe of early modern cu"lurcHordai^ says ' C",tUr'and G'nJ'r Abridge, that its 'entire philosophical set describes natural and sodal olienom ?f modern Wes,cn> culture too; teristics', 43 (a revised version of this essay appears in ead ., *Sexual Visions: Images* a "\tCnns of °PPositional charac- *Medicine between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries (London* *ofGende rin Science a "J* same volume 7-8,52-9). '1), 19-42, and see elsewhere in the

[21] Needham, *Counterpoints,* p. xii, see also 43 58 2V-A A • and *P<wim* for the formal recalcitrance of opposition.

At the same time, opposition is only one of the ordering principles of those institutions and beliefs that, together, form the elaborate cultural systems that anthropologists call systems of‘dual symbolic classification’.[22] In ethnographical literature, these have often been expressed visually by lists of opposed terms and categories drawn up in adjacent columns. This makes it easier to read the two co-ordinates that establish the significance of any listed item—one of them provided by the horizontal axis of the single opposition between that item and the corresponding item in the other column, the other by the vertical axis of multiple analogies between it and the other items in the same column. The presence of many different kinds of paired opposites constitutes the system’s conceptual and social inclusiveness and, hence, its complexity. At the same time, the fact that they are all instances of one logical relation and enjoy powerful symbolic associations with each other gives it unity and coherence as a representational scheme.

Il cannot, of course, be assumed that all the terms and categories in one column will share a common quality or attribute by virtue of being listed there; this is something that has to be established. It is the case, however, that extensive sharing is invariably present, if not between all the items, then among what T. O. Beidelman calls ‘clusters’ of them.[23] One early pioneer in the field, Robert Hertz, spoke of the ‘interchangeability’ that exists between the apparently very different terms (and, thus, between their opposites) that ‘designate under many aspects a single category of things, a common nature’—for example, the sacred pole of the religious universe.[24] A more recent commentator, Geoffrey Lloyd, agrees that pairs of opposites that have no manifest connection between them nevertheless become ‘correlated’ in the presence of sufficiently dominant associative principles.[25] And Beidelman too has said that the use of any individual oppositions on a symbolic occasion (in a ritual or myth, let us say) may be evocative of many others: ‘It is as though each symbolic instance were a subtle epigram whose point depended upon an associative chain-reaction of symbols triggered off by the one or two terms actually presented.’[26]

The clearest cases of correlation and the sharing of attributes occur when dual classification systems rest on primary polarities that are so dominant that they inform the whole field of relations. Obvious examples are the absolute moral and religious dichotomies between good and evil, and between sacred and profane, that occur in many societies. Only slightly less obvious is the basic dualism of right and left that underlies many of the symbolic ascriptions of traditional cultures, including that of ancient Greece,[27] but is less significant in modern ones. Needless to say, both these types of system are distributed between a column of positive (or superior) terms and categories and a column of their negative (or inferior) opposites. Indeed many, perhaps most, dual classifications evaluate and rank what is being classified, perfect equivalence being rarer than the theory of structural anthropology once expected it to be. Technically speaking, such classifications are asymmetrical or, in Louis Dumont's (and following him, TcherkezofTs) term, 'hierarchical.' The analogical associations and mutual reinforcements are such that any item in a column readily elicits the others, or can stand instead of them, in evoking the valency that governs the whole column.[28]

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[22] In what follows I have relied above all on two collections: Rodney Needham (ed.), *Right and Left: Essays on Dual Symbolic Classification* (London, 1973), and Maybury-Lewis and Almagor (cds.), *Attraction of Opposites.* Sec also Rodney Needham *Symbolic Classification* (Santa Monica, Calif., 1979), 7-8, 31-2,51-3.

[22] T. O. Beidelman, ‘Kaguru Symbolic Classification’, in Needham (ed.), *Right and Left,* 154.

[24] Robert Hertz, ‘The Pre-eminence of the Right Hand: A Study in Religious Polarity’, in Needham (cd.), *Right and Left,* 14.

[22] G. E. R. Lloyd, ‘Right and Left in Greek Philosophy’, in Needham (cd.), *Right and Left,* 169.

[24] Beidelman, ‘Kaguru Symbolic Classification’, 155; cf. the concept of‘recursive complementarity’ to denote the role of‘operator’ categories (like male/female) in organizing the classification of other categories and qualities, in James J. Fox, ‘Category and Complement: Binary Ideologies and the Organization of Dualism in Eastern Indonesia’, in Maybury-Lewis and Almagor (eds.), *Attraction of Opposites,* 44 7.

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How do these various complications apply to the case we are about to consider? In the 'high' culture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was certainly a kind of enthusiastic imprecision in the recourse to opposition. One is struck forcibly by the profusion—even promiscuity*—of various styles of oppositional thought and expression, by the delight in listing (if not columnizing) the binary aspects of experience and superimposing them on one another, and by the considerable latitude both in assigning single opposites to more than one type and in crowding into one type many different examples of opposition. Even the very ascription of opposition to items was far freer than we might expect—although this is only to confirm that its basis was cultural and symbolic, and not merely natural. But there was a reigning logical schema derived from various passages in the *Categoriae, Topica,* and *Metaphysica* where Aristotle defined different oppositional relations, examined those types of predicate that admitted a contrary, and applied the rules of inference derived from contrariety to the detection of errors in an opponent's argument. The distinctions between propositional relations established in his *De interpretatione* were likewise the source of the 'square of opposition' that invariably accompanied formal discussions of the subject in Renaissance textbooks on dialectic. The most convenient summary comes in the *Categoriae,* where Aristotle writes: 'Things are said to be opposed in four senses: (i) as correlatives to one another, (ii) as contraries to one another, (iii) as privatives to positives, (iv) as affirmatives to negatives.'[29]

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[27] A point recently reiterated by Lloyd, *Methods and Problems in Greek Science*, 30, when introducing the repr. of his essay 'Right and Left in Greek Philosophy'.

[28] Louis Dumont, 'On Value' (Radcliffe-Brown Lecture, 1980), *Procs. of the British Academy*, 66 (1980), esp. 220–1, 224–5; Serge Tcherkézoff, *Dual Classification Reconsidered: [illegible] wezi Sacred K[illegible]ship and Olher Examples,* trans. Martin Thom (Cambridge 1987) CSD 8-15 [illegible] ncy Needham, *Reconnaissances* (Toronto, 1980) 57- Needham [illegible] *Symbolic Classification*, 8–9. For examples from specific societies, see David Maybury-Lewis, 'Social Theory and S[illegible] Central Brazil', in Maybury-Lewis and Almagor (eds [illegible] Binary Systems in [illegible] 12 and in the same collection Elizabeth G. Traube, 'Obligations to the Source- [illegible] Complementarity and Hierarchy in an Eastern Indonesian Society', 323, 341; Pierre Bourdieu *The Logic of P[illegible]c* Richard Nice (Cambridge, 1990), 200-70 (Kabyle ethnography); Stewart, *[illegible]*

[29] *Categoriae,* lib, 15-20, trans. E. M. Edghill in *The [illegible] Works of Aristotle.* ed. W. D. Ross (12 vols.; Oxford, 1908-52), i. lib.

Such a typology helped to bring some order to the abundant dual classifications of witch-believing Europe. This is a matter of historical record, however theoretically untidy the concept of opposition and its use may presently seem to a cognitive anthropologist like Needham. Our task, in any case, is to report what contemporaries did with *their* concepts of opposition, not to judge them by the standards of formal analysis; and untidiness is, again, what we expect in cultural artefacts. It is remarkable, for example, that the most severe of the four modes of opposition—contrariety (Aristotle called it ‘maximum difference’)—was also the most popular. As a collective representation, the witch was the product of an age of cognitive extremism.[30] Yet contrariety was invariably conflated with privation and possession. This was partly due to the continuing influence of Aristotle’s own view of change, but mainly because the opposition regarded as most fundamental—good/evil—was construed as having the logical properties of both relationships (evil was both the contrary and the privation of good). In the 1630s it was reported that, in oratory at least, contraries had subsumed all the other kinds of opposition.[31] Above all, thanks to extensive analogy and ‘correspondence’, which are styles of associative thinking that have long been recognized as characteristic of early modern culture, many oppositional pairings were superimposed on one other, as well as on their moral prototype.

Some of the systemic features of dual classification were, therefore, at work in the integrating and ordering of categories. It would be misleading to think in terms of close parallels with the rigorous and comprehensive binary systems found in some other societies—like those of the Lugbara and Nyoro of Uganda, the Gê and Bororo of Brazil, and the Australian aboriginals—which dominate their concrete social arrangements as well as their cosmologies and ideologies.[32] It looks as though early modern Europeans confronted binary opposition more as a conceptual and moral phenomenon, and as an intellectual ideal, than as something actually practised in their institutions and social groupings. In this respect they belong to the second of David Maybury-Lewis’s three uses of polarity in social thought and action, pertaining to societies that ‘believe in the interaction of complementary principles in a binary cosmos, but whose social institutions do not reflect this belief’.[33] ‘Correlation’ and the sharing of attributes also took place more among clusters of opposites than

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[w] Lc Goff, *Purgatory*, 225, describes binary logic itself as ‘blunt opposition* and ‘bilateral confrontation*.

[11] Charles de Saint-Paul, *Tableau de I’eloquence franfoise* (Paris, 1632), 235-6.

[12] See John Middleton, ‘Some Categories of Dual Classification among the Lugbara of Uganda*, in Needham (cd.), *Right and Left,* 369-90, and Maybury-Lewis, ‘Social Theory and Social Practice’, and Aram A. Yengoyan, ‘Language and Conceptual Dualism: Sacred and Secular Concepts in Australian Aboriginal Cosmology and Myth’, both in Maybury-Lewis and Almagor (cds.), *Attraction of Opposites^* 97-116,171-90.

" Maybury-Lewis, ‘The Quest for Harmony’, 2. The distinction between ‘cosmological’ dualism and dualism in social organization (e.g. in moieties, or parts of villages) is repeatedly made by the other contributors to Maybury-Lewis and Almagor (cds.), *Attraction of Opposites]* sec esp. Uri Almagor, ‘The Dialectic of Generation Moieties in an East African Society’, 143-4, Anthony Seeger, ‘Dualism: Fuzzy Thinking or Fuzzy Sets?’, 192-3, and Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, ‘Dual Organizations and Sociological Theory’, 350-1.

t>— all of to.. Nevefto^ the absolute primacy of religious values and the both these features were re- extent to.*which* the,-“^^XUnoftlyadic terms occurred on inforced in the period) m a grand scale. As in other cases from anthropology, ‘the persistence of contrastive op osi ions both in myth and ative taxonomies [was] an expression of an underlying^logTcoHlualistic feitur^.’^The underlying structure ofa great many early modern dual classifications was thus asymmetrical. The important consequence was that the reversing of an oppositional relationship invariably meant the inversion of it. Moreover, the universal habit of representing order as the combination of things ‘high’ with things ‘low’ meant that the extension of the spatial imagery of opposition and inversion to non-spatial relationships was not *(pace* Needham) merely metaphorical; it was deemed to have the power of logical argument as well. Spatial imagery was, at the same time, rational proof.[35]

Finally, a great deal of this systematizing was explicitly recognized by contemporaries in the form of local cosmologies that formulated relational concepts like opposition and asymmetry, derived dual classifications from them, and pictured the whole scheme as a unity. This degree of indigenous, self-conscious elaboration (examined in the next chapter) has few parallels in the findings of anthropologists, with the result that historians of early modern Europe are more protected from the criticism of imposing particular dichotomies, and opposition itself, on other cultures?[6] Interchangeability, hierarchy, and invertability to a conscious degree unacknowledged by Aristotelian logic (and, again, by Needham[37]) were, thus, prominent features of the cognitive patterns that enabled people to think witches.

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But so too was complementarity?[8] Again and again in what follows, we shall find that opposites were said to require each other in order to form wholes and improve understanding. This was believed to be in conformity to a world order based on the unity of contrasting elements—the world somehow ‘desired’ opposites and would have been impossible, as well as unintelligible, without them. This is obvious enough as the cosmological equivalent of the commonplace that both opposites are needed for each to make sense; a case of an analytical truth about language entering into a logo-

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” Yengoyan, ‘Language and Conceptual Dualism’, 173.

” M.-L. Launay, *Monde renverse san-devas devout* de Fra Giacomo Affinati D’Acuto: Le monde remerse du discours religicux , in Jean Lafond and Augustin Redondo (cds.), *L 'Image du monde renverte et ses représentations littéraires et para-littéraires de la fin du XVI^e siècle au milieu du XVII^e* (Paris 1979), 142.

[36] For this danger (in the of the dich No Culture The ten Ca7 M OtOnY nat"c/culture), see Marilyn Strathcm’ ;No Nature, in acCorma.. and Strathern (eds.), *Nature, Culture and Gender*, 174–222. The criticism that the ethnography of polarity has sometimes failed bctwecnthccategoriesofobserversandthoseofthesocieiircth ■ ...cy writ a fail lo dlstlnSulsh properlj Greece (where self-consciousness about the right / left polaritvwas hi Ch|b<T S ‘o ,aPpIy bo‘h ‘o ancien ‘ *and Problems,* 29-30), and to modern non-European cukurcs /see fn X d? C!?pcd; scc L1oyd> Me,hods Conceptual Dualism’, 181-8). (see, for example, Yengoyan, ‘Language and

J. In *Counterpoints*, Needham attacks the notions of asymmetry and “>•«they oppc.r in .he of Louis Dumont and Serge Tcherkézoff. He consid Jbstraei knowledge of lheirownebssifiewion schemes in Z..TJA; 'T|CU ',eS ln lmpu,tng ,o peonies an pp. xix–xx, xxxii.

” For.too.ic.l discussion,seeNesdh.m , *Counterpoints*, 84–WL centric creation myth. It is also compatible, again, with anthropological theory, which has frequently acknowledged not merely the obvious fact of complementarity but its desirability to peoples who classify on a dyadic basis.[39] In a society divided entirely into equal moicties, and practising exogamy between them, complementary opposition could scarcely be anything but benign.[40] The implications wherever oppositions are asymmetrically weighted are, nevertheless, paradoxical—and in the case of Christian dualism most paradoxical of all.[41] In the example of early modern Europe, where many oppositions were contraries and most contraries were emphatically hierarchical, they are unsettling enough to return us to the kinds of structural problems sensed at the end of the last chapter. In the primary opposition good/evil, evil is needed as much as good. As the complement of good it completes the order of things; indeed, it makes that order perfect. The same must be true of demons and witches, w'ho thus become both distillations of everything negative and, at the same time, vehicles of consummation.

This is not some casual contradiction, but the one that is constitutive of Christian metaphysics and, thus, of demonology. Sir Thomas Browne expressed it perfectly when, in *Religio medici(\(A2* he observed that 'They that endeavour to abolish vice destroy also vertue; for contraries, though they destroy one another, are yet in [i.e. the] life of one another.'[42] The voice of a more obscure author, the Oxford divine Jeremy Corderoy, is more telling still, precisely because he talks routinely about what must have been a commonplace: 'Who so wil take away al wickednesse, by consequent taketh away vertue; for vertue consisteth in rooting out vice'.[43] No doubt the damage inflicted (and perhaps betrayed) by Browne's word 'yet' could be contained by Christianity's commitment to the notion of ulterior good. Consummation was, as Dumont puts it, 'not the absence of evil but its perfect subordination' (what he also calls its 'encompassment').[44] But something that is desired as much as it is detested is

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” For particularly clear examples, see Middleton, 'Some Categories of Dual Classification*, 369-90, esp. 377-8; Maybury-Lewis, 'Social Theory and Social Practice', 103-4.

[40] Herz, 'Pre-eminence of the Right Hand', 8; cf. Justus M. van der Kroef, 'Dualism and Symbolic Antithesis in Indonesian Society', *American Anthropologist,* 56 (1954), 847-62, on the 'functional antithesis' of the exchange of marriage partners between confrontational social groups.

[41] For this reason, Maybury-Lewis, 'The Quest for Harmony', 6, draws a contrast between strict complementarity of opposites, where hoped-for balance ensures world harmony (this constituting the attractiveness of dualistic thinking), and Christian polarity, where emphasis is on the struggle between opposites and the ultimate victory of one set over the other.

[42] Thomas Browne, *Religio medici,* in *Works,* ed. Simon Wilkin (4 vols.; London, 1836-5), ii. 95.

[41] Jeremy Corderoy, *A warning for wordlings, ora comfort to the godly, and a terror to the wicked* (London, 1608), 92. For the difficulty caused by contrariety to those who, like the 'father* of English antinomianism, John Eaton, wished to abolish feelings of sin, see Gertrude Huehns, *Antinomianism in English History* (London, 1951), 47.

[44] Dumont, 'On Value*, 224. Needham's objections **(*Counterpoints,*** 133-5) to the use of'encompassment* here rest, in part, on the view that the case of good containing evil is an idiocratic formulation of Dumont's, and not to be found in any cultural tradition. In fact, it was fundamental to Christian metaphysics throughout the medieval and early modern period. Needham also believes that Dumont simply conflates 'a particular ethical theory with a logical commonplace*. But the logic in question was the logic of privation, and this allowed for the identity of an ethical relation with a logical one in this instance (see below, Ch. 4).

and however
treads a wary
a while I shall
complementary
the eventual

4

Contrariety

... whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

(Romans 14:23)

There is nothing in the universe which does not have its contrary, and there would be no universe unless all things were contraries, nor is the universe preserved more by good than by evil, or by any one or other contrariety.

(Francisco Sánchez, *De divinatione persomnum, ad Aristotelem)*

Without a discord can no concord be,
Concord is when contrary things agree:

(John Norden, *The labyrinth of mans life. Or vertues delight and envies opposite)*

By contraries [wr] set together, thynges oftentymes appere greater. As if one shoulde set Lukes Velvet against Geane velvet, the Lukes wil appere better, and the Geane wil seeme worsen Or sette a faire woman against a foule, and she shal seeme muche the fairer, and the other muche the fouler. Accordyng whereunto there is a saiyng in Logique: *Contra ria inter se opposita magis elucescunt.*

(Thomas Wilson, *The arte of rhetorique)*

In the system of ideas that informed early Greek religion and natural philosophy, material flux and moral variety were traced to the interplay—sometimes the warring—of contrary entities in the world. The forces of discord (Strife) and concord (Love) were elevated to the position of primary contraries, as in the thought of Empedocles. Alternatively, in the Pythagorean view, such primal disorder was said to be transcended by obedience to laws of proportion; hence the existence of analogous processes of *concordia discors* in mathematical reasoning, musical harmony, physical health, moral improvement, and, ultimately, the universal structure of things. In Plato's *Timaeus* harmonization by proportion (of contrary elements, seasons, physical motions, and components of the soul) became the principle by which the Divinity created order from chaos. And the practical implications of this cosmology were illustrated in the *Symposium* by the physician Eryximachus with examples from gymnastic, husbandry, astrology, and religion, as well as medicine and music.[1]

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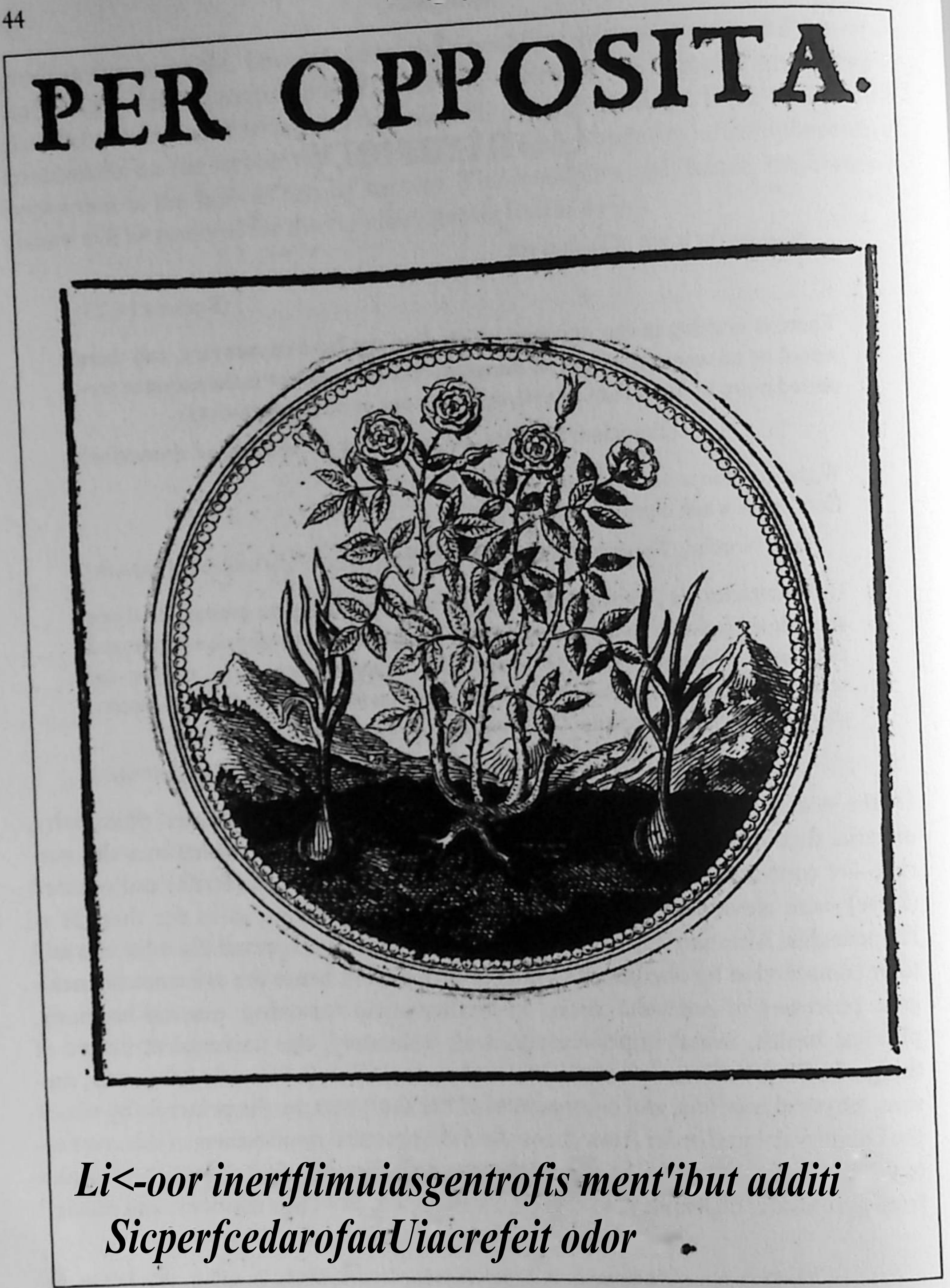
[1] Plato, *The Dialogues of Plato,* trans. B. Jowctt (5 vols.; Oxford, 1892), iii. 450-1,460-3 *(Timaeus,* 30-2,41-3); i. 556-8 *(Symposium,* 186-8). Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy,* 15-171, considers the appeal of pairs of opposites in modes of argument and forms of explanation down to Aristotle. See also W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* (6 vols.; Cambridge, 1962-81), i. 76-122,271-3,341-9,435-49, 465; S. K. Heninger, Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (San Marino, Calif., 1974), 146-200; Leo Spitzer, *Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony* (Baltimore, 1963).



PER OPPOSITA.

Li<-oor inertflimuiasgentrofis ment'ibut additi
SicperfcedarofaaUiacrefeit odor

Fig. 2 ‘Per opposite’ or ‘By opposites’ drawing. The inscription below it reads: ‘Worthless envy acts as a spur to noble minds; just as the perfume of roses increases next to a foul garlic.’ It appeared in the first edition ol *Symbolorum el emblematum ex re herbaria desumtorum centuria una collecta a I. Camerario* by Joachim Camerarius, 1590, Nürnberg. From the Rare Books collection of the Library of the University of Wales, Swansea. Print made by Roger Davies.

Both Plato and Aristotle endorsed a theory of the generation of opposites from opposites, the former in the course of the argument for immortality in the *Phaedo,* and the latter (after considerably modifying it) as essential for the explanation of all process. Aristotle argued that the categories in respect of which things were capable of changing were always one of two contraries, and that change was therefore matter moving between the contrary poles represented by the possession or privation of some form or forms. 'Everything', he wrote, '... that comes to be by a natural process is either a contrary or a product of contraries.' Any form present in matter was always, in principle, replaceable by its absent contrary; contrary forms could not, without contradiction, be realized in one and the same body, yet had to be potentially realizable. This was the basis of generation and corruption in the world.[2]

In the case of Christian metaphysics itself, the need was to give a dualistic account of the imperfections that marred the created world without extending this to first principles; to stress, that is, both the contrasting and correlative aspects of good and evil. Augustine achieved this by comparing the course of world history with the forms of ancient rhetoric. For him, the *civitas dei* and the *civitas terrena* symbolized an absolute dichotomy between the values and fortunes exhibited by communities in time, but this did not mean that they had independent origins or purposes. For God had 'composed' history as the Romans wrote their poetry, gracing it with 'antithetic figures'. Just as the clash of opposites *(antitheta)* was the most effective form of verbal eloquence, 'so is the world's beauty composed of contrarieties, not in figure, but in nature'.[3] The evils of carnal pride and self-love, and the states of confusion and disorder that marked the society of men and women were thus crucial vehicles of meaning in a work of art—indeed, a kind of discourse. This was an immensely influential formulation, both because of its status as a paradigm for Christian historical thought in the West and because it made linguistic relationships the (metaphorical) basis of all others.

For Aquinas, the problem of evil was also solved by recourse to linguistic forms—but drawn from logic rather than rhetoric. His classification of the whole of human conduct under the opposites of specific virtues and vices was sustained by the Aristotelian rule that contrariety was the relationship of greatest difference. Likewise, the key notion of evil as a deficiency of good drew on Aristotle's opinion that in every contrast of contraries there was also a contrast between a positive condition and its privation, such that one contrary was always lacking in the other.[4] Evil was thus a necessary consequence of good, given that all sublunary phenomena were susceptible to corruption. If there was no good in the world we could not speak of its privation; to the extent that we do speak of evil, good is presupposed. Conversely, knowledge of evil was a necessary prerequisite of knowledge of good, given that each term in a relationship of contrariety depended on its contrary for its own meaning and force; thus, in Augustine's formulation, 'even that which is called evil, being properly ordered and put in its place, sets off the good to better advantage, adding to its attraction and excellence.' Without, for example, wickedness, there would be no vindication of justice nor patient endurance to be praised'. According to the logic of contrariety they would not even exist.[5]

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[2] Aristotle, *Metaphysica,* 1018a, 1067a, 1069a-b, 1075a, 1087a—b; Plato, *Dialogues,* ii. 209-13 *(Phaedo,* 70-2); Aristotle, *Physica,* 188a-91a, quotation at 188b 25-30 *(Works,* cd. Ross, ii). Commentary in J. P. Anton, z/nr/oz/^'r *Theory of Contrariety* (London, 1957), 31-49,68—83, and Edward Grant, 'Were there Significant Differences between Medieval and Early Modern Scholastic Natural Philosophy? The Case for Cosmology', *Nous,* 18 (1984), 6-7.

[3] Augustine, *The citie of God*(bk. 11, ch. 18), trans. J. Healey (London, 1610), 422.

[4] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae,* Blackfriars edn. (60 vols.; London, 1963), viii. 106—16; Aristotle, *Metaphysica,* 1011b-18,1063b-17.

The simple formal truths embodied in these arguments became the foundations of the Christian intellectual tradition. But the older cosmological doctrines were also readily assimilated, notably the Pythagorean-Platonist notion of good as the harmonization of opposites by a benevolent Creator. Verses in Ecclesiasticus which inspired Irenaeus and Augustine spoke of the works of God divided 'two by two, one against one... all double, one against another'. Tertullian described a universe constructed from diversity, 'so that all things should consist of rival substances under the bond of unity, as of empty and solid, of animate and inanimate, of things tangible and intangible, of light and darkness, of life itself and death'. And in a characteristic piece of Neoplatonism, Boethius attributed the orderliness of diurnal and heavenly motion, the harmonious mingling of the elements, and the regular progress of the seasons to the balancing of mutually discordant contrary forces by God's love.[6]

◆ * *

One way of examining the widespread influence of the language of contraries in the early modem period itself would be to consider its role in individual fields of enquiry like physics, natural magic, medicine, psychology, or ethics. For example, contrariety was actually built into the structure of traditional physics and medicine by their fundamental reliance on the idea of opposed elements, qualities, and humours in the natural constitution of things. Aristotle's view of contrariety as the basis of change was given an enormous fresh diffusion via the many printed commentaries on his works and the curricula of university faculties of philosophy, many of them relatively untouched by, or slow to absorb, the more recent thinking and the newer categories. But even those purportedly hostile to Aristotelian science could talk in similar terms. Francis Bacon, for instance, spoke of there being 'armies of contraries in the world, as of dense and rare, hot and cold, light and darkness, animate and inanimate, and many others, which oppose, deprive, and destroy one another in turn'. He believed that everything in nature was, as he put it, 'biformed': 'For there is no nature which can be regarded as simple; every one seeming to participate and be compounded of two.'[7] Another scientific non-conformist was the Neapolitan Giambattista Della Porta, one of Europe's most influential and frequently cited natural magicians. He clearly found traditional elemental theory unsatisfactory but substituted for it only another dualism. This was the notion, central to the whole natural magical tradition, that all natural effects proceeded from either attraction ('sympathy') or repulsion ('antipathy'). In another part of this book we will find sympathies and antipathies being grafted onto Peripatetic doctrines by many early modern Aristotelians. A list of all those who explored this additional dualism would include most of the natural philosophers of the period, except for the outright mechanists and corporealists.[8] Galilean physics, with its commitment to the category of quantity, eventually put paid to contraries in the natural world. But before that happened, it is safe to assume the currency of views like those of the Frenchman who admitted that the triune God had struggled mightily in creating material things, 'of which the binary *(le binaire)* is the master and the model'.[9]

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[5] [illegible]] *St. Augustine: Faith, Hope and Charity,* trans. L. A. Arand (London, 1947), 18; Aq^nSmS'^^ [illegible] e, viii. 117.

[6] Tertullian, *Apologeticus,* cd. John E. B. Mayor tranc Al., c [illegible]. Boethius, *De consolaiionephilosophiae, bk. iy. csmmz*. 6 For an early [illegible] 'sth°Utp (^a"lbndKe> 1917)> 139; John Walton, see Boethius, *De consolatione philosophise* ed Mart, c [illegible] trans of the latter by Mark Science, Early English Text Soc. 170 (London, 1927), 273-5.

Much the same was true in the field of medicine. Galenists believed in the principle of *contraria contrariis curantur,* which they derived logically enough from their scholastic humorology.[10] In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries this principle was denounced by Paracelsus and his followers, and in consequence became one of the most widely contested issues in medical theory and practice. But whereas the Paracelsian view of disease proved to be quite different from its Galenic competitors, the new healing principle was only the inverse of the old, not a negation of the logic of contrariety altogether. Contrary forces still acted in and on the human body, and it was only because Paracelsus saw them as energizing each other, not cancelling each other out in a higher resolution, that he could draw the conclusion that 'like weakens like *(similia similibus curanturj.* His first major English follower, Robert Bostocke, illustrates the same continuity. He too insisted that traditional medicine was wrong in exploiting 'dualitie, discord and contrarictie' in nature—making war not peace in the human body. Instead, the physician should aim at a unity and agreement between a disease and its cure. In effect, he should act in conformity to the principle of unity in the original erralion, rather ihAnukc forgranrad the binary opposirion broughl by the Ml Bosioeke called the tempter who persuaded Eve to transgress and so introduced disease to mankind 'Binaries', a nice indication of the conceptual alliance between demonology and contrariety. But in doing so he was clearly not stepping outside traditional categories. In fact, he subscribed to a version of the cosmology of *concordia discon,* arguing that contrarieties tn the four qualities and in the heavenly bodies could not have been contained without the overriding control of divine providence.[11]

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[7] Francis Bacon, *Deprincipiis atque originibus* and *De sapientia veterum,* in *The Works of Francis Bacon,* cd. J. Spedding, R. L. Ellis, and D. D. Heath (14 vols.; London, 1857-74), v. 475; vi. 710. Bacon planned works with titles like *Historia gravis et levis, Historia densi et rari, De calore etfrigore,* and *Historia sympathiae et antipathiae rerum;* for the full extent of his commitment to 'axiological antithesis', see Graham Rees, 'Bacon's Philosophy: Some New Sources with Special Reference to *the Abecedarum novum naturae',* in Marta Fattori (ed.), *Francis Bacon: Terminologia e fortuna netxviisecolo* (Rome, 1984), 223-44, esp. 232. For the 'Rule of Contrarys' in the Baconian John Aubrey's natural philosophy, see Michael Hunter, *John Aubrey and the Realm of Learning* (London, 1975), 126-7.

[8] Giambattista Della Porta, *Natural magick,* trans, anon. (London, 1658), 5-6, 8-10; cf. below, Ch. 14. That sympathy and antipathy were associated with contraries is shown by a passage from Robert Du Triez, *Livre des ruses, finesses et impostures des espnts malms* (Cambrai, 1563), sig. 24*: 'Sympathie et Antipathie signifient autant que conformite et deformite: consonance et dissonance: concorde et discorde: union et guerre: les uns contraires aux autres, et sont sour[c]es et fontaines de tous les biens et maulx qui sont produitz en ce monde'. See also L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (8 vols., New York, 1923-58), v. 495; vi. 414.

[9] *Raemond, L'Antichrist,* 349-50.

[10] For examples, see Thorndike, *History of Magic,* ii. 887; iii. 220; vi. 251; vii. 160; vm. 134.

The 'occult virtues' (among them relations of sympathy and antipathy) that fascinated later sixteenth-century medical writers were often derived from the more fundamental notion of a nature consisting of contraries.[12] It was left to later medical theorists like J. B. van Helmont to make the more radical break. Van Helmont denounced Galen but also Paracelsus, 'because he hath inclosed all healing in things that are alike, admitting in the meantime, the tempest of contraries.' Writing in the 1640s Van Helmont argued that, in its vegetable and mineral aspects, nature was 'ignorant of contraries' *(Natura contrariorum nescia* was the title of one of his chapters). But by then the debate on contrariety in medicine had been raging for more than a century.[13]

An example of the place of contrariety in what might be called the high ground of moral debate is the passage that opens book 2 of *Il Cortegiano,* where Castiglione debates the interdependency of good and evil and their unknowability in isolation:

> For since ill is contrary to good, and good to ill, it is (in a manner) necessary by contrarictic, and a certaine counterprise, the one should underproppe and strengthen the other, and where the one wanteth or encreaseth, the other to want or encrease also, because no contrary is without his other contrary.[14]

This is true of all moral categories and, thus, of all behaviour. One could not act justly, magnanimously, or with constancy without an awareness of injustice, pusillanimity, and inconstancy. But, again, the notion was commonplace: 'where there is no wrong done, there can be no patience shewed; where there is no resistance, there can be no victory; and where there is no victory, no crowne.'[15] Most routine discussions of psychology and good conduct in this period drew incessantly on simple dichotomies, for example between reason and passion, the spirit and the flesh, the soul and the body, and, of course, right and wrong. The aim, according to one of the most influential Elizabethan moralists, was to oppose to every virtue 'the contrarie and repugnant vice; to the end that at the sight of them, being so out of square, so hurtfull and pernicious, vertue it selfe might be more amiable and in greater esteeme'.[14] * [16] In ethics and epideictic rhetoric it became a discursive habit to resort to the paired notions of following virtue and fleeing vice. The obvious encouragement this received from moral theology is illustrated in a work like Abraham Fleming's J *monomachie of motives in the mind of man.* Fleming declared that 'contrarie motions' were encamped in the human mind, such that it was the site of continual strife between opposites. His book (a translation of *De conflictu vitiorum et virtutum,* variously ascribed to St Augustine and Ambrosius Autpertus) consisted of a catalogue of twenty-five paired virtues and vices 'with the manner of their opposition or contrarietie'.[17]

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[11] R[obcrt] B[ostockc], *The difference betwene the auncient phisicke, first taught by the godly forefathers, ^n"s'^'"^t.epeace and concord.andthe latter phisicke proceeding from idolaters, ethniches.and heathen: as Gallen, andsuchotlier consisting mduahtie.discorde, andcontrarietie(London* 1585) sics Bi* Biiii' By? C«,,-, and Th. auihors obtestation'; AUra G. Debus, n, *E.*IS,, *Paracelsians* (New York, 1966), 57–64.

[12] See, for example, Giovanni Francesco Olmo, *De occultis in re medica proprietatibus* (Brescia, 1597), 1–3 (*Universam contrariis constare, hincque deduci occultas rerum proprietates*).

[13] Joan Baptista van Helmont, *Oriatrike or, Physicke refined*, trans. J[ohn] C[handler] (London, 1662), 161–75, quotation at 171; Walter Pagel, *Joan Baptista van Helmont: Reformer of Science and Medicine* (Cambridge, 1982), 19–21, 41–6, 103, but Pagel does also point to van Helmont's fundamental commitment to the dualism of sympathy and antipat[illegible]

trades was also summarized in Noah Biggs, TA/JS v X Si? He'TMnt ? arS^ent about con-

[14] Baldassarc Castiglione, *The^r^^^^^* 1651), 214-17.

[15] Cordcroy, *Warning for wor[illegible]s,* 92-3; see also 123-4.

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These various areas of debate were central to early modern intellectual life, and men like Bacon, Della Porta, Paracelsus, and Castiglione were among the most widely read authors of the age. Other areas and other names could no doubt be added—men like the examiner of all men's wits, Juan Huarte, or the reducer of all knowledge to an *ars oppositorum,* Charles de Bovelles.[18] But the important point is that, since contrariety was thought to characterize the logic of the Creator's own thinking, there was nothing to which it could not in principle be applied. Its cosmological, ethical-social, and cognitive aspects are, therefore, best illustrated together, as they appear, for example, in a typically exhaustive (not to say exhausting) analysis by the French classical scholar Loys Le Roy. It begins with a conventional statement of *concordia discors*\ nature 'desires' contraries because it is only in conjunction with its opposite that each entity or quality can survive and contribute to the order and beauty of the whole, 'the contrarietie becomming unitie, and the discord concord, the enmitie amitie, and contention covenant'. The astronomical proximities of Venus and Mars, and of Jupiter and Saturn, are an example of this principle; the reciprocal action of the four elements in the generation, composition, and preservation of sublunary bodies is another. To these Le Roy adds logical, physiological, and sociological instances:

> There is matter, forme, privation, simplicitie, mixtion, substance, quantitie, qualitie, action, and passion. In mans bodie, bloud, flegme, choler, melancholie; flesh, bones, sinews, vaines, arteries, head, eies, nose, eares, hands, feete, braine, hart, liver, and splene. In the œconomical bodie, husband, wife, children, Lord, slave, master, and servant. In the politike bodie,

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[14] Thomas Beard, *The theatre of Gods judgements* (London, 1597), sig. A4^{r}.

[17] *A monomachie of motives in the mind of man: or a battell betweene vertues and vices of contrarie qualitie.* trans. Abraham Fleming (London, 1582), sig. Aiii', and table of contents.

[11] Juan Huarte, *Examen de ingenios, the examination of mens wits,* trans, from the Italian of C. Camilli by R. Cfarew] (London, 1594); Joseph M. Victor, *Charles de Bovelles 1470-1553: An Intellectual Biography* (Geneva, 1978), 73-87.

Justice Fortitude, Prudence, Temperance, Religion, warfare, judgement, counsaile, magistrates, and private *men,* noble, and base, rich and poore, young and olde, weake and strange, good and evill, labourers, artificers, merchants, retaylers, and caners.[19]

This is a good example of the early modern enthusiasm for contrariety running away with itself—a kind of mental promiscuity in spawning contraries for, to us, it is not clear that all these are even opposites, let alone contraries. Le Roy admits this but still insists that most of them are. His list, therefore, is the result not so much of a failure of logic as of a determination to encompass variety within a favoured formal relation. This in itself testifies to the hold of contrariety over his modes of thought and perception.

In any case, the litany continues. Painting and music involve compositions of contrary elements and effects. All sciences consist of the 'comparing of contraries', such that physicians must relate health to sickness, while ethical and political philosophers 'doe not onelie shew what is honest, just, and profitable; but also that which is dishonest, unjust, and domageable'. The case that covers all the others is, of course, that of morality. Good and evil are both contrary and conjoined, 'that in taking of one, both are tane away'.[20] Finally, Le Roy elaborates on the mutual antipathies that keep all things within their bounds. These 'contrary affections' include rivalries among animals, plants, and minerals, the struggle between reason and passion in human nature, the controversies of the learned, and, above all, the historical conflicts between classes and nations. This enmity of peoples, and the contrarieties of fortune that result, are God's way of recalling the world to a proper sense of moral proportion.

This conception of a substantive contrariety in all natural, intellectual, and social phenomena is found not only in other works dealing with universal order but scattered throughout the general literature of the period. In Pierre de La Primaudaye's highly popular *Academie françoise* (1577) and Lambert Daneau's *Physice Christiana* (1576), the formula of *concordia discors* again leads to the elaboration of analogies between natural processes, the structure of the human body and its relationship with the soul, and the constitution of households and commonwealths. Daneau, ostensibly writing a 'Christian natural philosophy', said that God had imbued natural things with Aristotelian contrariety so that they might undergo change, and yet, through contrariety's 'mutuall knot and temperament' remain parts of a unity. The same was true of cities, where there were 'diverse sortes of men, ritche, poore, faire, foule, Subjectes, Magistrates, young, olde, Husbandmen, Souldiours, who are of diverse states and unlike callings, and many tymes also of contrarie'. There were instrumental reasons for this, and aesthetic benefits to be had from the harmony and proportion among the parts, the actual details, in terms of weight, number, and measure, were known only to God.[21] At this same time, Pontus de Tyard was also maintaining that contraries sustained the world, and, like Le Roy, listing instances from every area of nature and human experience.[22] Ten years later, in Bodin’s unpublished ‘Colloquium heptaplomeres’, the treatment of world harmony is again Neoplatonic, with its starting-point in musical theory and its verses on God’s tempering of ‘things opposite in every way’ that strongly recall those of Boethius. Here too the idea that true unity is based on a multiplicity of contrary interests is extended to political and, more controversially, religious affairs.[23]

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[19] Loys Le Roy, *Of the interchangeable Course, or variety of things in the whole world,* trans. R. A(shley) (London, 1594), fo. 6r; all further quotations from fos. 5v–7r ('How all things in the world are tempered and conserved by unlike, and contrarie things').

[20] S[illegible] Le[illegible] Loys Le Roy, De l'origine, antiquité, progres, [illegible] utilité de l'art polit*ique* (Pa[illegible] 1567) [illegible]

French philosophical and literary circles were evidently much concerned with these themes in the later sixteenth century.[24] But it has also been said that the belief ‘that every creature and condition had its antithesis’ was one of the major assumptions of English scholars and writers of the same period: ‘if Elizabethans were particularly intent upon the antipathies which divided both man and his universal environment, they also recognised that this exactly balanced conflict of opposites was essential to the settled order of the world.’[25] Francisco Sanchez, the Portuguese philosopher and physician and author of the sceptical tract *Quod nihil scitur,* did at least know that:

> all nature consists of contraries, and is preserved by contraries, as by matter, form, and privation; hot and cold; wet and dry; good and evil; generation and corruption; life and death; happiness and sorrow; summer and winter; north and south; good fortune and bad fortune; war and peace; riches and poverty; fertility and sterility; virtue and vice; piety and impiety. And to go into greater detail, cat and mouse; fox and chicken; hound and hare; wolf and lamb; man and [woman]. Why say more?[26]

Why, indeed? But the early part of the next century saw the debate continue. In the 1630s Nicolas Caussin remarked again that world order depended on the paradox of‘discrepance and discord infinitly agreeing’, a paradox originating in its Creator’s mind. ‘Nature,’ he wrote, ‘which is an expression of divine understanding, is never so great and admirable as in contrarieties, and it seemes she takes delight to derive the goodliest harmonies of the world from certain disagreeing discords.'[27] This was a view shared by the first professor of natural history at Madrid, Juan Eusebio Nieremberg, in his work on 'occult' philosophy.[28] In 1648, in the unexpected setting of a *lit de justice,* the *avocat-général* of the Paris *parletnent,* Omer Talon, derived a theory of the checks and balances in the French state from the same premisses. 'The general order *(économic)* of nature', he told Louis XIII, 'consists not only in the difference but in the contradiction of [those] principles that are continually trying to destroy each other yet subsist on this domestic warfare'; politics, too, was the working out of dynamic oppositions.[29] Another politician, the English MP Sir John Eliot, suggested that the wonder of there being imperfections such as contrarieties in the Creation at all was only exceeded by the wonder of their producing not chaos but order. The antipathies in the behaviour of just the four elements were enough to astonish, while those in the world at large were beyond the grasp of 'Arethmeticke'. Yet, 'in the divine whcele of providence their conversions are soe made, as all move directly to one end by the allay and contemperation of the parts, to worke the conservation of the whole.'[30]

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[21] Lambert Dancau, *The wonderfull woorkmanship of the world,* trans. Tfhomas] Tfwync] (London, 1578), fos. 84'-6, quotation at 85’; cf. Pierre de La Primaudaye, *The French academic,* trans. T.B., 2nd edn. (London, 1589), 18,691.

[22] Pontus de Tyard, *Deux Discours de la nature du monde, et de sesparties* (Paris, 1578), fos. 80'—81*.

[22] *Jean* Bodin, *Colloquium of the Seven about Secrets ofthe Sublime,* trans. M. L. Daniels Kuntz (Princeton, 1975), 144-9.

[24] D. W. Wilson, ‘Contraries in Sixteenth Century Scientific Writing in France’, in E. T. Dubois *et al.* (eds.), *Essays Presented to C. Al. Girdlestone* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1960), 351-68; Neil Kenny, *The Palace of Secrets: Beroaldede Verville and Renaissance Conceptions ofKnowledge* (Oxford, 1991), 127-38.

[22] James Winny (cd.), *The Frame of Order* (London, 1957), 18-19. See, forcxample, Richard Barcklcy, *Thefelicitie of man* (London, 1598), 468; Edward Forsct, *A comparative discourse ofthe bodies natural and* ***politique*** (London, 1606), 38.

[26] Francisco Sanchez, *De divinationepersomnum, ad Aristotelem,* in id., *Tractatesphtlosophtci* (Rotterdam, 1649), 282-3; the last pairing reads ‘hominem et hominem’, presumably a misprint for ‘hominem et mulierem*.

The view that the world was 'composed of contraries' had evidently become a commonplace. Earl Wasserman calls it 'one of the great controlling patterns of thought and of literature' in the period, while Robert Grudin claims further that 'the tendency to resolve experience into contrariety [was] so widespread that it may be seen as one of the primary intellectual modalities of the period.'[31] Commonplace too was an apparent corollary: that natural and social harmony depended on the self-regulation of contrariety by divine controls originally implanted in the Creation. But not everyone was convinced that harmony was being maintained or that change would always issue in an equilibrium of contrary forces. Alongside Le Roy's confident enthusiasm ran an alternative reading of contrariety and privation as agents of decay. According to its magisterial exponent, the English bishop Godfrey Goodman, change could not, given the Fall of Man, have a neutral outcome. Challenging the strict Aristotelian position, he argued that nature was not inclined equally to generation and corruption, but unequally to corruption. The view that contrariety ('Binarius' in Bostocke's case) had resulted from, or had at least been actualized by, the Fall was in fact a common one. Since it made sin the crucial factor, it blended well with a general eschatology dealing with disorder, decay, and dissolution as the world moved into its old age. Goodman spoke not of *concordia discors* but of a nature violent with contraries, and a world of‘cruell and bloodie Antipathic of creatures'. No less fertile than Le Roy in finding instances, he embraced all phenomena in his pessimistic cosmology: 'all those things, which by natures first erection and institution were linckt and coupled together, doc now admit a separation through their owne enmitie.'[32] Evidently, universal decay was just as popular as universal stability. Interest in it was rising to 'extensive and continuous excitement from the 1570s into the 1630s, and subsiding sharply from then on'.[33] The important point is that whatever cogency the two different cosmological narratives enjoyed depended largely on the place of contrariety in them—on the one hand as a vehicle of reciprocity and, thus, of preservation; on the other as the occasion of a debilitating strife. However the processes that went to make up the world were interpreted, contrariety was essential to them.

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[27] Nicolas Caussin, *The holy court,* trans. T. Hfawkins] (London, 1634), pt. 3,30,198.

“ Juan Eusebio Nieremberg, *Curiosayocultafilosofia,* 3rd cdn. (Madrid, 1643), pt. 2 *(Occultafilosofia),* 327-9.

Cited in E. H. Kossmann, *La Fronde* (Leiden, 1954), 27-8, who calls this view of politics 'typically baroque'. Gérard Sabatier, 'Imaginairc, Etat et société: La Monarchic absolue de droit divin en France au temps de Louis XIV', *Procès [Calders d'analyse politique et juridique],* 4 (1979), 41-2, 94-101, 151-2, explores the binary modes of the forms of political 'imagination' inspired by Louis XIV. For another application of the principle of*concordia distort to* politics, see Juan de Solorzano Percy ra, *Emblemata regio-politica* (Madrid, 1653), 379-89.

[50] John Eliot, *The monarchic of man,* ed. A. B. Grosart (2 vols.; London, 1879), ii. 131-5, quotation at 134.

[11] Earl R. Wasserman, *The Subtler Language: Critical Readings of Neoclassic and Romantic Poems (Bd'* timore, 1959), 53 n. 7, and 53-66 for further references; cf. Robert Grudin, *Mighty Opposites: Shakespeare and Renaissance Contrariety* (London, 1979), 16-17, with many further examples, concentrating on Castiglione, Paracelsus, and Giordano Bruno; cf. Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance,* rev. cdn. (Harmondsworth, 1967), 78, 86-96, 196-9; Rosemond Tuvc, 'A Mediaeval Commonplace in Spenser's Cosmology', *Stud. Philology,* 30 (1933), 133-47.

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Although they were greatly re-emphasized and, in the case of decay theory, modified, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries these various cosmological doctrines were very much an inheritance from the past. They dominated because they belonged to a metaphysics to which most European intellectuals in the West were, in any case, committed. However, in two other areas where contrariety was also stressed, we can speak of patterns of thought and utterance that were more distinctive to the period. One of these was the communication system itself. Contemporary views concerning the arts of speaking and writing, together with some of the recurring features of actual discourse, suggest the existence of linguistic preferences in early modern high culture. To be sure, the basic typology of expressions—the repertoire of logical and rhetorical devices—as well as the high value placed on eloquence, were, again, traditional. But the elements of choice, standardization, and, finally, exaggeration (leavened, no doubt, by the workings of the imagination) are still uppermost. The field of historical vision here is, of course, vast, and any argument has to be impressionistic. The impression, however, is that contrariety, in various forms, was highly popular as a linguistic strategy. And if this helps us eventually to understand the language of demonology, then it is an impression that ought to be substantiated.

To move from cosmology to language is not, of course, to move very far. In certain respects, there is no distance at all. This, in itself, is important because it means that

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« Godfrey Goodman, *The fall of man* (London, 1616), 251, see also 15-22, and *passim.* A reply to Goodman based on the usual view of contrariety and *concordia discors* was made by George Hakewill, zM *apologie or declaration of the power and providence of God in the government ofthe world,* 3rd. edn. (London, 1635), esp. bk. 5. There are full accounts of both works and of the subsequent history of the controversy in Victor Harris, *All Coherence Gone: A Study of the Seventeenth-Century Controversy over Disorder and Decay in the Universe* (London, 1966), *passim.*

[M] Harris, *All Coherence Gone, SI.*

we can even predict a prevalence of contrariety in the latter from its prevalence in the fo X In the views discussed so far, the structure of the world was seen as consisting of the principles of its intelligibility; these were, so to speak, written into it. Cosmology was at the same time epistemology. This was because the world's design was seen 2 having the properties of language. For Pythagoreans and Platonists to conceive of it as a musical composition, described in terms of harmonic intervals, was a typical conflation of substance and form. For Aristotle, nature worked in the way reasoning worked; hence the chorus of criticism in early modern Europe that his philosophy was not about the real world but about the categories of logic. The most striking instance is that of Augustine, for whom, as we saw earlier, history was itself an utterance, a figure of God's speech.[54] The 'composition' of the world by contraries was not, it seems, merely a metaphorical or symbolic notion but an empirical one as well. Language, for its part, had the properties of the world; its verbal surface turns out to be not at all superficial. 'Grammar', said Le Roy, turning his list of contraries back on itself (and anticipating structuralist accounts of phonetics), 'consisteth of letters, vowels and mutes.'[55] 'In grammar', agreed Tyard, 'is it not apparent that from the various letters, silent or sounding, joined together in mutual assistance, are formed the syllables, from the syllables the words, and from the words the oration or finished speech?'[56] *Concordia discors* had its own linguistic equivalent in the traditional rhetorical figure of *synoeciosis* (or oxymoron). John Hoskins, an Elizabethan writer on rhetoric, said this was 'a fine course to stir admiration in the hearer and make them think it strange harmony which must be expressed in such discords'.[57]

Contrariety was thus a universal principle of intelligibility as well as a statement about how the world was actually constituted. And this had implications for the way men and women used language. Their ability to understand the world—its natural fabric as a working out of contraries, or the morality implanted in it in the form of privations of good, or the aesthetic composition of unity from diversity'—became a function of the way they ordered their own utterances in terms of modes of expression that corresponded to its linguistic forms. This was not merely a matter of heuristic convenience; there was a kind of imperative at work. For Aquinas it had meant reducing all logical opposites to contraries, the juxtaposition of which enabled Christians to grasp moral and, by extension, all relations. Over and over again, in early modern Europe, we find this principle voiced. Contraries have to be implied together for them to mean anything at all; but brought deliberately together, they 'shew themselves', as La Primaudaye put it, 'a great deale better'.[58] Le Roy again-

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[54] See above, n. 3. T[illegible] H[illegible]ley tr[illegible]s. includes the comments of [illegible] scholar Juan Luis Vives, who glossed Augustine at this point with [illegible] references to the Roman theorists of oratory and the rhetorical figure *contentio* (or *antitheton*).

[55] Le Roy, *Of the interchangeable course*, fo. [illegible].

[56] Tyard, *Deux discours*, fo. 81r.

[57] John Hoskins, *Directions for speech and style* [c.1599–1600], ed. Hoyt H. Hudson (Princeton, 1935), 36; cf. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica*, 304: 'the world was then [illegible] *concordia concors*, a composition to which oxymoron was the most appropriate figure of rhetoric.'

[58] La Primaudaye, *French Academie*, 60.

> we may say in all cases, that contraries when they are put neere, one to the other, they appeare the more cleercly: Even as want maketh riches to be the more esteemed; and the obscuritie of darkenesse commendeth the cleercnesse of light: The swectnesse of the Springtime is more esteemed by the sharpenesse of Winter: the happinesse of peace, by the calamities of warre; and faire weather after long rayne?[9]

In this respect, Bishop Goodman's pessimism could make no inroads; 'contraries', he agreed, 'are best known by their contraries'.[40] A pattern believed to be immanent in the world could best be captured by discourse patterned in the same way. Le Roy's statement is about contrariety, but it also *is* contrariety. It is an example of the further rhetorical figure *contentio* (Greek: *antitheton* English: 'antithesis'), the balancing of sentences, phrases, or individual words with opposed meanings. Given that this conjunction of content and form was a general phenomenon, we may suppose that the cosmology of contrariety had the effect of making specific forensic and literary strategies based on the discourse of contrariety attractive to communicators and their collaborating audiences.

What is distinctive about the history of discourse in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is the sheer scale on which a stylistic patterning of this sort could be brought to bear. At no other time in European culture has a speech community been so preoccupied with devising and disseminating standard forms of communication on an international scale. The reasons for this, the conditions that made it possible, and the arguments it provoked are obviously very complex. But their essence is a matter of general knowledge, even if the subject—and 'rhetorical man' in general—has only recently begun to receive the detailed historical attention it deserves.[41] Humanism put the arts of language at the centre of intellectual enquiry and pedagogy at a time when printing made possible their recodification and widespread dispersal. Changes in society and in social values opened access to schooling, and identified communication skills with moral improvement and success in public life. The staggering amount of publishing on the overlapping subjects of dialectic, rhetoric, and poetics is only just beginning to be realized, but their role in countless school and university curricula can well be imagined.[42] Students were taught to express themselves and evaluate the expressions of others in terms of standard typologies—modes of argument, stages of a composition, varieties of oratorical address and poetic genre,

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[19] Le Roy, *Of the interchangeable course*, fo. 6'. [40] Goodman, Fa// *of Man,* 161.

[41] On what is, potentially, a huge subject, I have found the following esp. useful: W. G. Crane, JK/7 *and Rhetoric in the Renaissance: The Formal Basis of Elizabethan Prose Style* (New York, 1937), *passim* Sister Miriam Joseph [Rauh], *Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language* (New York, 1947), 3-40; Wilfried Barner, *Barockrhetorik* (Tübingen, 1970); James J. Murphy (cd.), *Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric* (London, 1983); Brian Vickers, *Classical Rhetoric in English Poetry* (London, 1970); id., 'Rhetoric and Poetics', in *Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy,* cd. Charles B. Schmitt, Quentin Skinner, Eckhard Kessler, Jill Kraye (Cambridge, 1988), 715-45; id., *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford, 1988), 254-374; Heinrich F. *Y\<W,RhetorikderAffekle: Englische Wirkungsdsthetik im Zeitalter der Renaissance* (Tübingen, 1975), 13-103; Alex L. Gordon, *Ronsard et la rhetorique* (Geneva, 1970), 11-45.

« On publications in rhetoric, see James J. Murphy, 'One Thousand Neglected Authors: The Scope and Importance of Renaissance Rhetoric', in Murphy (cd.), *Renaissance Eloquence,* 20-36.

[illegible] so all-powerful was the classical ideal of schemes of tropes and [illegible] these critical norms was really a matter of reading and emulation that [illegible] intently studying models, collecting examples and composing replicas. 'Rhetorical m[illegible] processes', [illegible] been said, 'were absorbed into their intellectual metabolism.'[43] It is not an exaggeration to speak of a rhetorical culture in early modern Europe, or to agree that rhetoric was 'the key to Renaissance humanism and to Renaissance thought and civilisation in general'.[44] The period was marked by elevated claims for the powers of eloquence and very great self-consciousness about linguistic accomplishment. Writers and speakers on any topic drew from a well-defined set of strategies and could expect their readers and listeners to recognize their choices—an expectation and a recognition that William Kennedy has called 'rhetorical complicity'.[45]

It is easier to see how thought-processes and reading habits were conditioned[46] to a very high degree in witch-hating Europe than to pinpoint the influence of individual tropes and figures. But if contrariety was philosophically privileged as a point of access to world order, it was certainly conspicuous in communication theory too. In dialectic and rhetoric textbooks, considering what was contrary to a proposition was one of the important topoi for devising arguments for its defence or refutation. Its special appeal lay in opportunities for striking and compelling antithesis between species at opposite ends of the same genus. Aristotle had found it satisfying 'because the significance of contrasted ideas is easily felt, especially when they are thus put side by side', and the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium* because 'opposing thoughts ought to meet in a comparison'.[47] The contemporary view was that contrariety was the 'most flourishing way of comparison', and pattern books of rhetorical skills would include sections entitled 'The Contrary' in model orations.[48] According to the Tudor figurist Richard Sherry, an antithesis 'of two diverse thynges confirmeth ye one bryefely and easelye' and makes both 'seme bygger, and more evidente'. Joannes Susenbrotus wrote in his hugely successful schoolbook *Epitome troporum ac schematum et grammaticorum et rhetorum* that since argument by contraries 'is especially elegant, hardly another is used more frequently by orators to vary and enrich speech'. In the 1630s the French rhetorician Charles de Saint-Paul repeated the standard view, together with the cosmology that underlined it: 'contraries placed near to one another appear the more; [so] that the light that immediately follows the darkness is more sensible to our eyes, and the white and black colours laid together in one painting appear with more vividness than when they are set apart.'[49]

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[43] Vickers, 'Rhetoric and Poetics', 741. There is now a definitive account of rhetorical education and its effects in id., *In Defence of Rhetoric*, 255–70.

[44] Vickers, 'Rhetoric and Poetics', 715; Paul Os[illegible] Kristeller, 'Rhetoric in Medieval and Renaissance Culture', in Murphy (ed.), *Renaissance Eloquence*, 2.

[45] William J. Kennedy, *Rhetorical Norms in Renaissance Literature* (London, 1978), 3.

[46] Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric*, 258.

[47] Aristotle, *Rhetorica*, sect. 1410a; *Rhetorica ad Herennium* [illegible]

[48] For examples, see Richard Rainolde, *A booke called* [illegible] *of rhetorike* (London, 1563), fos. ix', xii', xix', xxiiii', xxxv'–xxxvi', lxi'; Hoskins, *Directions* [illegible]; John Clarke, *Formulae oratoriae* (London, 1632), 101–2; Thomas Blount, *The academie of eloquence, containing a compleat English rhetorique* (London, 1654), 15.

Contrariety had obvious applications in *encomium* and *vituperatio,* which together made up the third, and increasingly dominant, mode of oratory, epideictic. It was also vital to a linguistic skill that (according to a recent scholar) 'permeated intellectual life in the early sixteenth century'—the ability, highly cultivated in Renaissance educational practice, to argue with equal conviction for either of two opposed positions *(argumentum in utramque partem,* or 'antilogy').[50] But its general popularity reflected the developing sixteenth-century fashion for rhetorical amplification as a crucial strategy in *any* kind of argument.[51] One senses it as a common linguistic feature throughout early modern texts, and it was encapsulated in the widely repeated aphorism, *opposita iuxta se posit a magis elucescunt.* Even the onset of controversy between the traditional logic and the new logic of Petrus Ramus and his followers failed to dislodge it as a favourite resource. Ramist textbooks excluded the Aristotelian 'square of opposition' and its discussion of contraries from logic. But, quite apart from the fact that Ramus relied exclusively on dichotomies in the classifying and disposing of arguments, his scheme for logic does introduce opposition and contrariety at an early stage. In effect, he took over a popular device and incorporated it into a pedagogic methodology that had a vast influence in the later sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth. Those who adopted it, for example the 'puritan' intellectuals studied by Perry Miller, ended up deploying contrariety and defending its efficacy in terms very similar to those found elsewhere in the literature.[52]

Contrariety was also the essence of several of the important schemes and figures for the 'colouring' of language discussed by textbook rhetoricians under the heading of *elocutio*—the subject which increasingly absorbed their attention during the sixteenth century. Here the stress was on the ornamentation of speech rather than the ornamentation of thought. Saint-Paul, for example, gave an aesthetic, as well as a cognitive role to antithesis: 'the contrariety of the sounds that make up musical concords produces no more sweet a harmony than does this contrariety of words in revealing the pleasing aspects of a discourse.'[53] But the distinction was notional and

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[49] Richard Sherry, *A treatise of schemes and tropes very profytable for the better understanding ofgood authors* (London, 1550), sigs. Diiii', Evi*; Joannes Susenbrotus, *Epitome troporum ac schematum et grammaticorum et rhetorum* (London, 1562), 72; Saint-Paul, *Tableau de I'eloquencefranfoise,* 234-5. Further discussions of contrariety in Wilson, *Rule of reason,* sigs. Eiv*, Jv^{r}; Nicolas Caussin, *De eloquentia sacra et humana,* 3rd cdn. (Paris, 1630), 245-8.

[50] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (London, 1980), 230-1; cf. Joel Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley, 1978), 31-63, csp. 34; *Kors, Atheism in France,* 81-109, who assembles evidence for the effects on views about atheism of the widespread educational practice of having to argue both for and against propositions.

[51] c.g. Cipriano Suarez, *De arte rhetorica* (Paris, 1573), fos. lO'-ll'; Philipp Mclanchthon, *De rhetorica* (Basel, 1519), 129; Desiderius Erasmus, *De duplici copia, verborum ac rerum commentariiduo* (Strasburg, 1516), fo. lxii'"*.

[52] Perry Miller, *The Nen> England Mind: The Seventeenth Century (New York,* 1939), 126,137; Walter J. Ong, *Ramus: Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), 199-202.

[51] Saint-Paul, *Tableau de I'eloquencefranfoise,* 251-2.

, • 1 nt hptween siiinifiers and signifieds) difficult to sustain. In (like its modern, equivaI ™ functions were often dealt with together, and ^enennnentof'nd'^un^^resboth^d on contrariety. The most inllnentia! of …is was usually the e figures b *contentio* » (or »»«■>*«»»), where composition rested on contrary terms, XTor whole sentences. Other related dev,res were■. *.ompara t.o* (or SJwr,,,,), ^Zor'on (renrrepao/owor^rfttr*), litotes, and nnttptam It[54] ts not necessary “taail to the intricacies of these figural schemes or trace all the hterary convent,o,,s associated with them to see that verbal patterning based on contrariety was a popular and effective rhetorical choice. *Content"*, in the typical view, was fit to set forth a copious style'. Orazio Toscanella, who listed many examples in his *Ciceroniana*, reported that it was dubbed by many scholars 'Lumina orationis'. Johann Heinrich Alsted, the encyclopaedist, said that antitheses were especially pleasing to hearers and had a great impact on their minds; René Bary thought that the figure was 'ingenious and pleasant' (and noticed that it was known to Augustine). Antithesis of sentences, according to the author of *The niysterie of rhetorique unveil d,* marvailously delights and allures'. The Elizabethan authority Henry Peacham thought that antithesis was one of the very best methods of 'garnishing' orations and said that none was more popular in his time. George Puttenham agreed on the extent of the usage but already regarded it as excessive, a criticism made also by Gabriel Harvey when he included contraries among those figures amassed, in his view mechanically, by the cultivators of Ciceronian style.[55] Whether or not these cautions were heeded is unclear. But it was Morris Croll's view that in the language art of *antitheta* it was 'the seventeenth century [that] arrived at absolute perfection'.[56]

The best way, finally, to indicate the extent of contrariety as a literary phenomenon in early modern Europe would be to identify its appeal for individual authors, its influence on genres and the structuring of texts, and its role in creating moods. Among those on whom Croll focused were Francis Bacon—who himself recommended the study of *antitheta rerum*"—and Sir Thomas Browne. John Lyly's

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VA^«r?r//h,nnTdJlefini-nrg isti is g rhetorica∗figurcs was>and remains, difficult. I have followed Joseph, … *se of … Arts of Language*, 3 2? '2S ' LCC A_ S0"nin○> A *Handbook to Sixteenth-Century* R toric lon, 1968), 45–6, 60–3, 204, Vickers, *Defence* ○fRht'○ric' 491_8_and id_ *Classical Rhetoric*, fi t 2 SXffion o f am esis early RL,'I? r- Lh fr○m t?C modern German theorists are conveniently collected in …a e Hildebrandt Günther, *Antik … e … era … Theorie im 17. Jahrhundert* (Marburg, 1966), 110-11.'References tod^SX^hSs^ong^ … nish writers on rhetoric are in Jose Rico Verdu, *La retorica española de los siglos XVI y XVII* (Madrid, 1973), 275–6.

[55] H … k … tions for speech and style, 37; cf. Blount, *Academie* *Ciceron*^™^, *antitheta, et adiuncta* (Antwe , 1566), 'O el○9UTMe' 32; Orazio Toscanclla, *quatuor libris proponent universum ornate dicendi modern ffe h* ?3' ^anr\Hcinrlch Alsted, *Rhetorica*, Bary, *La Rhetorique franpoise*(Paris, 1659k 347 andSn^T' '616)l 287_90 (^ispagin.tcd); Rene *The mysterie of rhetorique unveil'd* (London 1665) 164 „ "^7 "an]Ple.s (first Pub- 1653); J.S., Sergeant; first edn. 1657); Henry Peacham *The garden of eloquence* r'i ○ 3 So ^^"16 (likeliest ascription to John tenham, *The arte of English poetic* (1589), 176- Gabriel ffarv^ r • <Lon.don>1577)« si8- Ri"'; George Put-Clarence A. Forbes (Lincoln, Nebr., 1945) 90—1 Oth ^Ctreromanu^ed. Harold S. Wilson, trans. *Poetices libri septem(n.p. [Lyons],* 1561), 202-3. erc○mments on antithesis in Julius Caesar Scaliger,

[56] Morris Croll, 'Attic Prose in the Seventeenth r. . > • .. "tUr> ' ,n ,d_ ' S 'y,e' *Rhetoric, and Rhythm,* cd. J. Max Patrick *el al.* (Princeton, 1966), 77.

[57] Bacon, *Works,* iv. 472-92, and for the related studv nfr ; study of *Colours of Good and Evil,* vii. 65-92; com-

‘euphuism’ (what Hoskins called ‘an even gait of sentences answering each other in measures interchangeably’) was achieved by unremitting use of antithesis as a figure of words.[58] Among Sidney’s favourite poetic devices was the figure of *synoeciosis.*[59] Shakespeare's appeal to contrariety has often been noticed, most obviously in Robert Grudin’s study *Mighty Opposites,* while Norman Rabkin has invoked the relationship of complementarity to account for his repeated use of dramatic structures in which pairs of polar opposites are presented to the reader as ‘equally valid, equally desirable, and equally destructive’.[60] Of the *Sonnets* alone, it has been said that antithesis is used so often in them that ‘it becomes an inevitable part of experience’.[61] Similarly, of ‘radical importance’ to Shakespeare’s prose language was logical disjunction—the habit of splitting up ideas into antithetical alternatives and dividing the sentences that express them into two sharply antagonistic but symmetrical halves, ‘dividing and binding at the same moment’.[62]

The stylistic traits, allegorical structure, and satirical effect of a work like Baltasar Grecian’s *El Criticon* have all been traced to its reliance on polarity.[63] Agrippa d’Aubigne's *Tragiques* was similarly dependent on antithesis.[64] Even Racine’s *Phedre* shows features of style that, according to one critic, reflect the violent play of antagonistic polar forces.[65] Among verse traditions alone, the idiom of contrariety was the basis of three forms of enormous influence, the Petrarchan love sonnet, the metaphysical conceit, and the neo-classical loco-descriptive poem.[66] It has been said of Petrarchan poetry that oxymoron was its ‘normative elocutionary strategy’, and of the baroque lyric in general that an ‘ethos of contrarieties [generated] a field of

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mentary in Lisa Jardine, *Francis Bacon: Discovery and the Art of Discourse* (Cambridge, 1974), 219-26; Brian Vickers, *Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose* (Cambridge, 1968), 116—40.

[M] Jonas A. Barish, ‘The Prose Style ofjohn Lyly’, *English Literary Hist.* 23 (1956), 14-35, focuses esp. on antithesis; Hoskins, *Directions for speech and style,* 37.

[59] Vickers, *Classical Rhetoric,* 111.

[40] Grudin, *Mighty Opposites, passim",* Norman Rabkin, *Shakespeare and the Common Understanding* (London, 1967), 200, and sec also 11-13,30-31,73-4,81,101,185-8. Cf. E. A. Armstrong, *Shakespeare 's Imagination (London,* 1946), 93; Joseph, *Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language,* 130-41.

[41] Brian Vickers, ‘Rhetoric and Feeling in Shakespeare’s *Sonnets',* in Keir Elam (ed.), *Shakespeare Today: Directions and Methods of Research* (Florence, 1984), 71; Vickers counts 230 uses of antithesis and 33 uses of the related figure *synoeciosis.* Cf. Claes Schaar, *An Elizabethan Sonnet Problem: Shakespeare s Sonnets, Daniel's Delia, and their Literary Background* (Lund, 1960), 133—5; F. C. Kolbe, *Shakespeare s Way: A Psychological Study* (London, 1930), 21-2, on the 400 antitheses on the theme of good and evil in the words and phrases of *Macbeth.*

[42] Jonas A. Barish, *Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), 23-40 (quotation at 28).

[41] Marcia L. Welles, *Style and Structure in Gracidn's 'El* Cn/ww* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1976), 48-9, 113-16, 136-48, 185-6, 198-9. For antithesis in Ronsard and Du Bcllay, sec Gordon, *Ronsard,* 185-7; Philippe de Lajarte, ‘Formes et significations dans les *Antiquites de Rome* de Du Bellay , in *Alelanges sur la litterature de la Renaissance d la memoire de V.-L. Saulnier* (Geneva, 1984), 727-34. For polarity in Dante, see Ronald B. Herzman and William A. Stephany, ‘ “O Miscri Seguaci”: Sacramental Inversion in *Inferno XDi\DanteStud.%(\9n)^-65.*

[44] Henri Weber, *La Creationpoetique au Xrfsiecle en France* (2 vols.; Paris, 1956), n. 609-25.

[4J] Leo Spitzer, *Linguistics and Literary History: Essays in Stylistics* (Princeton, 1948), 90-125.

[46] L. Forster, *The Icy Fire: Five Studies in European Petrarchism* (Cambridge, 1969), 1-60; E. Miner, *The Metaphysical Mode from Donne to Cowley* (Princeton, 1969), 118-58; Wasserman, *The Subtler Language,* 35-168.

. nn J antitheses'[67] Antithesis also influenced the overall shape and "^te7± oX y works, especially those with a didactic purpose. A„ti. "oTfor Xnple, was a feature of the writing of the great Florentine historians like Leonardo Bruni.“ A vast number of'mirrors' of vrrtuous behaviour also included Xrreut examples as negative reinforcement'.[1]' A revealing example from a related XT"an William Gouge's thesaurus of family regulations he Purit, *Of domesticall duties* of which he wrote: 'because contraries laid together doe much set forth each other'in their lively colours, I have annexed to every duty the contrary fault, and aberration from it.' Gouge may even have had a precise rhetorical model in mind; in Dudley Fenner's translation of Ramus and Talaeus, contrariety (as a figure of thought) was actually illustrated by household order and its various abuses.''0 The typographic or spatial layout of books, pamphlets, and broadsides could be governed by the same linguistic codes. Works of persuasion and polemic directed at general audiences placed truths and errors on adjacent pages,[71] or in opposed columns or tables,[72] or in alternating paragraphs or sentences. On a mid-seventeenth-century English broadsheet on keeping the sabbath, the 'works of light' that should, and the 'works of darkness' that frequently did, mark the Lord's day faced each other in iconographical opposition across the two sides of the page.[73]

Thus, arguments *a contrariis,* or 'by antithesis', and the verbal schemes and figures associated with them became conventional in a wide range of contexts. At the most general level of all, they played a vital part in sustaining that interest in paradox, contradiction, and mutability which, it has been suggested, marked European literary sensibilities at the turn of the sixteenth century. The primary mood in all these cases was that of irony, and irony (as the rhetoricians always defined it) was the trope of contrariety. It would be rash, given the depth of former controversy on the subject, to add up these and similar features and call them ‘the baroque’ in art and literature; but it is equally difficult to forget that what that label suggested, essentially, was what Leo Spitzer called ‘the conflict of polarities’ as a conceptual and stylistic trait.[74]

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[67] Kennedy, *Rhetorical Norms,* 21-2, see also 20: 'The result of such a rhetorical patterning is a careful structural proportioning of the poetic utterance into antithetically balanced words, phrases, lines, couplets, tercets, and quatrains, all combining to form antithetically balanced sestets and octaves.' Cf. Giulio Herczeg, 'Struttura delle antitesi ne) 'Canzoniere' Petrarchesco', *Studi Petrarcheschi,* 7 (1961), 195-208.

[68] Struever, *Language of History,* 128-43 (on Bruni).

° Herbert *Gnbes, The Mutable Glass: Mirror-Imagery in Titlesand Texts of the Middle Ages and Eng-Inh Renaissance,* trans. Gordon Collier (Cambridge, 1982), 53

" William Gouge, *Of domestical! duties* (London, 1622),''Epistle dedicatory'; Dudley Fenner, *The ar[et "f^Wke and rethonke[stc]... Together nnth examples for the practise of the same for methode in the govemment of the famelie, prescribed tn the woorde of God (n.p.* [Middleburg], 1584). Other works arranged by contraries are Jean de Marconville, *De la bonte et mauvaistie des femmes* (Paris, 1566); Guillaume de La Perncrc, *The mirrour of poltcie,* trans, anon. (London, 15981- Tenn Mel..Ve TVII j. de Pmaru, L'M,r0U 'r du Pr,"C' *chretien (Paris,* 1566); Nicholas Breton, *The good and t he badde or descrim nalnebaJde'<>r Captions of the worth.es, and unmorih.es of this age* (London, 1616).

" e.g. George Downame, *An abstract of the duties commanded in the law nTCnJ tr t i* AW *°fGod* (London, 1620), left page = correct behaviour/right page = contrary sin.

[72] e.g.'Come ye blessed, &c.Goe ye cursed, &c*, a'godlv table* nfr1628 ... Presenting the seven deadly sins (right-hand table) and their polar opposite virtues (left-hand ki J; ta): Tessa WaU, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991), 238-40 (with illustration/

[71] *Dies Dominica (c.* 1650), woodcut illustrated in David Kunkle, Histo r, *The Early Comic Strip: Narrative Strips and Picture Stories in the European Broadsh^r* * Comic Stri P' * idcn Prodsheetfrom c.1450 to 1825* (London, 1973), 199.

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If in communication theory and literary practice contrariety was a highly favoured strategy, in religious discourse it was indispensable. There does not seem to be anything comparable in the history of religion in other epochs of European history. We have seen that Augustinian and Thomistic theodicy gave medieval moral theology and theological history’ a shape based on contrariety. The figure of the Antichrist, surely the quintessence of oppositional representation in Western religion, was also prominent, even from the second and third centuries onwards. But the intensity with which religious values and entities were dichotomized, and the extent to which this pervaded debate and polemic on an international scale, were new. Truth and error, righteousness and sin, the Church and its enemies, Jerusalem and Babylon—it is as though things that had hitherto been (and would again be) seen as subject to gradation were re-categorized in terms of absolute opposition. The terms of traditional logic capture this exactly. Whereas for Aristotle the contraries good/bad could admit an intermediate (neither good nor bad) and were thus an example of the sub-group *species contraria mediata,* in early modem Europe they could not, and were classed accordingly among *species contraria immediata.* One of them now had to be affirmed, there being no intervening species.[75]

The move from language to religion, like that from cosmology to language, was in fact natural and immediate. Quite apart from a substantial literature dealing with the poetics of preaching, and the huge expanse of devotional poetry itself, we are confronted by the suffusion of religious thought and writing by figures of contrariety. Even dual classification itself was invoked by the polemicists. The greatest French Catholic authority on the Antichrist, Florimond de Raemond, reminded his readers that St Clement had heard St Peter say that, just as Pythagoras had divided the principles of things into ten ‘Antitheses and contrarieties’, so there were ten equivalent dualisms in morality and theological history. These were represented by: ‘Abel and Cain, Noah and the Giants, Abraham and Pharaoh, Isaac and the Philistines, Jacob and Esau, Moses and the magicians, Satan and the Son of Man, St Peter and Simon Magus, St Paul and the Gentiles, Jesus Christ and the Antichrist’.[76]

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[74] Spitzer, *Linguistics and Literary History.* 118; cf. Colic, *Paradoxia Epidemica. passim,* who deals with many of the themes I have been discussing and speaks (p. 33) of an ‘epidemic of paradoxy in the Renaissance’;}. Roussct, *La Litterature de Page baroque en France: Circe et lepaon* (Paris, 1954),parnw; I. Buffum, *Studies in the Baroque from Montaigne to Rotrou* (New Haven, 1957), 40-2; Lowry Nelson, Jr., *Baroque Lyric Poetry* (London, 1961), 14-15; B. L. Spahr, ‘Baroque and Mannerism: Epoch and Style’, *Colloquia Germanica: Internationale Zeitschriftfurgennanische Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft.* 1 (1967), 78-100.

[75] For a striking example, see the analysis of the ‘antithetical structure’ of Calvin’s *Institutes* by Ford Lewis Battles, ‘Calculus Fidei’, in W. H. Neuser (ed.), *Calvinus Ecclesiae Doctor* (Kempcn, n.d.), 85-110 (I owe this reference to Mark Greengrass); Battles argues that Calvin arrived at *via media* views by the ‘successive fractionalization by dichotomies of the true from the false’. The usual range of theological contraries is indicated in Andreas Gerhard [Hyperius], *Topica theologica conscripta* (Wittenberg, 1565), fos. 79'-80’.

[76] Raemond, *L Antichrist.* 60 (Raemond arranges the paired names in a vertical list).

The occasion for this way of talking was, of course, the onset of fundamental confeslnal Zlry and the development of ever more intensive programmes of reli±s purification. Whatever the antecedents of the conflict may have been, the emergence of Protestant churches, the Catholic reaction to dns and the working out of the subsequent hostilities, divided Europe on an unprecedented scale. The consequences for both the internal politics of nations and their relations with other states are a matter of general knowledge. The age is distinguished by historians as one of religious war and other manifestations of acute religious violence—iconoclasm, persecution, forcible conversion, exile, martyrdom. Attitudes and arguments hardened until they too were marked by irreconcilability and by semantic and verbal violence. ‘If a man say to one,’ lamented the French *politique* Francois de La Noue, ‘ “This man is a Protestant”, by and by he will answere, “Then is he a wicked heretik”, and saie to another, “This man is a Papist”, and he also will say, “Then is he naught”.’ When pressed to explain this, La Noue added, men could only say of a religious opponent that ‘his religion is contrarie to ours.’[77] Thus writers tended more and more to take up extreme positions and defend them extravagantly; they became preoccupied with the poles of religious and moral debate. Any reader of early modern religious polemic will be familiar with the discursive traits that made books and pamphlets into battlegrounds where contrary opinions might clash.

But as well as depictions of conformity and deviance, doctrine itself could be inherently polar. Its content, like the manner of its expression, could drive the believer to contrariety. In one of the articles (based on 2 Corinthians 6: 14-15) from the confession of faith adopted by German and Swiss Anabaptists at Schleithcim in 1527, it was said that:

> all creatures are in but two classes, good and bad, believing and unbelieving, darkness and light, the world and those who have come out of the world, God’s temple and idols, Christ and Belial; and none can have part with the other.”

Protestant, and particularly Calvinist, doctrines of original sin and election demanded judgements in terms of absolutes.[79] The extremes of human depravity and divine perfection were such that no temporising with relative standards and achievements, with the merely good-enough, could be tolerated. For Calvin it was ridiculous to speak of weighing sins, since every transgression of divine law set aside God’s authority in some respect and was therefore mortal. The implications of election were similar, since God’s choice could never be changed, and since he was not simply indifferent to the reprobate but explicitly condemned them, there was no room for neutrality or ambiguity on the part of the individual. Calvin taught that those whom he passed over, he condemned. His followers assumed, with biblical warrant, that people who were not for them were against them. In Tudor England, John Bale declared (citing Augustine) that ‘either we are citizens in the New Jerusalem with Jesus Christ, or else in the old superstitious Babylon with antichrist the vicar of Satan.’[80] In Stuart England, and in a fashion typical of French, English, and New England reformers, John Preston wrote: ‘There is no middle sort of men in the world, all are either sheepe or goates, all are either within the Covenant, or without the Covenant, all are either elect, or reprobates: God hath divided all the world into these two, either they are the Lords portion, or the Divels portion.’[81] George Downame was yet more explicit: ‘Not to goe forwards’, he wrote in 1639, ‘is to goe backward ... there is no standing in the midst betweene Heaven and Hell.’[82] To their foremost historian today, it has seemed that the English Puritans, in particular, were victims of a ‘piebald mentality’. Incapable of any subtlety in categorizing their foes (or, indeed, themselves), they transformed them all into ‘papists’, ‘atheists’, and, in the political sphere, ‘malignants’. In this way, polar opposition had a profound effect on English representations of Catholicism and of Arminianism and its supporters, and, thus, via the propaganda of John Pym and his Parliamentary group, on the outbreak of the Civil War itself.[83]

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[77] François de La Noue, *The politicke and militarie discourses of the Lord de la Nouue,* trans E.A. (London, 1587), 4°L

[78] Hans J. Hillerbrand, (ed.), *The Protestant Reformation* (London, 1968), 132.

[79] For the use of contraries to elaborate election and reprobation, see Theodore Beza, *A booke of christian questions and answers*, trans. A. Golding (London, 1572), fo. 81.

We might expect all this from predestinarian Calvinists. But among Father Francis Coster’s instructions for making the sign of the cross is this piece of Jesuit semiotics:

> Further, the remission of sins and the celestial glory is shown when the hand is passed, not from the right shoulder to the left, but, on the contrary, from the left to the right. Because we who were with the goats on the left side, stinking from the filth of our sins, are by the Cross and Passion of Our Lord transported to the right side with the sheep, reconciled to the eternal Father, having received the remission of our sins and the promise and guarantee of the Celestial Kingdom.[84]

The early Jesuits, according to Marjorie Reeves, ‘saw the world as the battlefield of two mighty “opposites”, under whose banners of good and evil the whole of humankind was encamped’.[85] More recently, it has been said of seventeenth-century

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[w] John Bale, *The Image of Both Churches, Being an Exposition of the Most Wonderful Book of Revelation.* in Henry Christmas (ed.), *Select Works of John Bale* (Cambridge, 1849), 252.

[11] John Preston, *The new covenant* (London, 1630), 507.

[12] George Downame, *An apostolicall injunction for unity and peace* (London, 1639), 18.

[11] Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London, 1988), 146-8, and, applying the point more generally, id., *The Puritan Character: Polemics and Polarities in Early Seventeenth-Century English Culture* (Los Angeles, 1989), 25-9. On English anti-Catholicism as the product of binary categories, see Peter Lake, ‘Anti-Popery: The Structure of a Prejudice’, in Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (eds.), *Conflict in Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics 1603-1612* (London, 1989), 72-106.

“ Cited by Louis Chatellier, *The Europe of the Devout: The Catholic Reformation and the Foundation of a New Society.* trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1989), 39 (from Coster’s *Libellus sodalitatis.* Antwerp, 1588). Chatellier remarks that there was nothing gratuitous in baroque piety, 41.

[15] Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1969), 274, citing r. Montanus, *Apologia pro Societate Jesu* (Ingolstadt, 1596), who included a chapter on such ‘opposites as Jacob/Esau and Loyola/Luther.

French Catholic writers that they too ‘seem only to recognize two absolute categories the just and the wicked, the saved and the damned’.[86] One of them, with Augustine’s two cities apparently in mind, traced the errors of the Huguenots to the rule that all good and holy things have their contraries’. Another spoke of families divided by religion as consisting of ‘some on the right hand of Jesus Christ, the others on the left’.[87] A third spoke of the contrasts between the church fathers and their enemies the heretics in a string of linguistic antitheses.[88] After Trent, Catholics, like their Protestant counterparts, became addicted to something that looks, despite (or, perhaps, because of) their Augustinianism, like ‘tirelessly reiterated Christian Manichaeism’.[89]

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the conscience became the site of warring oppositions. One of the most persistent themes of early modern casuistry, Protestant and Catholic alike, was the spiritual combat fought out in every individual soul between the forces of good and evil in all their many forms. The spirituality of the age was heavily influenced by new techniques for introspection, meditation, and devotion based on the idiom of contrariety and couched in the metaphors of real warfare. The ‘spiritual exercises’ of Loyola and the history of their use illustrate this very well, but so too does another highly successful Catholic devotional manual attributed to the Theatine Lorenzo Scupoli. First published in 1589 and reissued and translated many times, it described spiritual combat as a constant, unending struggle for control of the rational will between God and ‘the cruel contradictions and adverse motion’ of human sensuality. For the truly virtuous and the downright vicious this struggle was always one-sided; the real brunt of battle was borne by those who had greatly sinned but wished to amend their lives. Like the medical Galenists, Scupoli thought that contraries were best overcome by contraries. His advice (reminiscent of the Council of Trent’s) was that the repentant Catholic should counter the temptations of particular vices by frequently and fervently acting out their contraries. When sensuality stirred and evil thoughts arose, good thoughts ‘in opposition to those evill suggestions’ were to be placed in the soul to deny them entrance. And to keep the upper hand, ‘vertues ... contrary to those now-extirpated passions, and overcome vices’ must be repeatedly undertaken.[90]

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[86] Robin Briggs, *Communities of Belief: Cultural and Social Tension in Early Modern France* (Oxford, 1989), 254.

[87] René Benoist, ‘Opuscule, contenant plusieurs discours de meditation et devotion’, in P. [illegible], *Histoire de la* [illegible] *mort,* [illegible] *miracles des Saincts* (Paris, 1610), sig. 6v; Paul de Perrieres-Varin, *Advertissement à tous chrestiens, sur le grand et espouvantable advenement de l’Antechrist, et fin du monde, en l’an mil six cens soixante et six* (4th edn. (Pa[illegible]), [illegible]), 37. For the Catholic and ‘heretical’ churches as contraries, see Louis Richeome, *L’Idolatrie Huguenote* (Lyons, 1608), 72-216, esp. 202-5.

[88] [illegible] Gillet [illegible]eud.?], *La Subtile et naifve recherche de l’heresie* (Paris, 1605), 60-3.

[89] Robert Muchembled, *Popular Culture and Elite Culture in France 1400–1750*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (London, 1985), 222, see also 28.

[90] [Lorenzo Scupoli], *The christian pilgrime in his spirituall conflict, and conquest*, trans. Thomas Sadler [also attrib. to Juan de Castañiza] (Paris, 1652), [illegible] 38–47, and *passim*; commentary in Louis L. Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven, 1954), 125-35. Cf. *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, trans. T. A. Buckley (London, 1851), 96 (Session 14, ch. 9). For the same [illegible] in Luis de Granada’s *Ecclesiasticae rhetoricae* [illegible] Gwendolyn Barnes-

These were simple recommendations with an evidently powerful appeal to those intent on religious self-fashioning. If rhetoric was one of the major sources of mental conditioning in early modern culture, casuistry was surely another. It was founded on an equivalent level of theorizing and publishing, and disseminated on the same massive scale. The most fundamental and widely applicable form of religious education in this area was the catechism, and decalogue teaching was always a vital part of it. In this economy of sin the commandments and their transgressions were invariably presented as either contraries or—as in the texts of the Lutherans Jodocus Willich and Niels Hemmingsen—antitheses.[91] ‘Where any duty is commanded, the contrary thereunto is forbidden’, wrote an Anglican about his church’s version, ‘and where any sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded’.[92] According to the catechism author Josias Nichols, true doctrines and false errors reflected each other, ‘even as by all contraries, every good thing is the more perceived, felt and esteemed’.[93]

It does seem possible, then, to speak of religious thought-patterns, as it does of recurring styles of argument and communication elsewhere—and of these patterns as including specific versions of the general resort to contrariety. Richard Sherry’s defence of *contentio*—‘that the foulnes of the faute being exaggerate, the goodlines of the vertue shulde be more encreased’—might well stand as the poetic principle of much of the preaching and writing of the early modern reform movements.[94] Indeed, it would not be implausible to suppose that rhetorical training—like that available, for instance, in Jesuit schools—was, in part, responsible for the mental and textual habits of the godly. Above all, as Patrick Collinson has said, ‘the language and social

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Karol, ‘Religious Oratory in a Culture of Control', in Anne J. Cruz and Mary E. Perry (eds.), *Culture and Control in Counter-Reformation Spain* (Oxford, 1992), 58.

[91] Jodocus Willichius, *Totius catecheseos christianae expositio* (Frankfurt, 1551), repr. in Johann Michael Reu (ed.), *Quellen zur Geschichte des kirchlichen Unterrichts in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands zwischen 1530and 1600(9 vols.-, Gutersloh,* 1904-35), iii. 141; Niels Hemmingsen, *Catechismi quaestiones concinnatae* (Wittenberg, 1564), 23-4. For the ‘Seven Sins’ and their contraries, see Jean Gerson, ‘ABC des simples gens’, in id., *(Euvres completes,* ed. P. Glorieux (10 vols.; Paris, 1960-73), vii. 310 ff.

[92] Richard Sherlock, *The principles of holy Christian religion: or, the catechism of the church of England paraphrased* (London, 1663), 28; *cf.* Edmund Bonner, *A profitable and necessarye doctrine, with certayne homelyes adjoyned therunto* (London, 1555), sig. Mmi^{r}; Zacharias Ursinus, *The summe of Christian religion,* trans. Henry Parry (Oxford, 1589), 812,817; Peter Barker, *A judicious and painefull exposition upon the ten commandements* (London, 1624), 35; Immanuel Bourne, *A light from Christ... or, the rich jewel ofChristian divinity* (London, 1646), 483; Joannes Wollebius, *The abridgment of Christian divinitie,* trans. Alexander Ross, 3rd edn. (London, 1660), 311—431. See also Lowell *Gallagher, Medusa's Gaze: Casuistry and Conscience in the Renaissance* (Stanford, Calif., 1991), 7: casuists ‘invoked a clearly demarcated and impenetrable boundary between permissible and forbidden behaviour; they instilled in the consciences under their direction a habit of interpreting human experience as an ongoing sequence of binary oppositions dictated by the strict observance or the unqualified transgression of ordained laws; finally, they implied that human experience could be made intelligible in these terms: as phenomena to be located on one side or the other—without involvement in the margins—of established boundaries.’ For a catechetical treatment of the seven ‘capitall sinnes’ and their opposite and contrary virtues, see the influential Catholic version of Robert Bellarminc, *A shorte catechisme of Cardinall Bellarmine,* trans. R. Gibbons (‘Augsburg’, 1614), 93-100 (a trans, of his *Dottrina Christiana).*

[91] Josias Nichols, *An order of houshold instruction* (London, 1595), sig. E5^{f}.

[94] Sherry, *Treatise of schemes and tropes,* sig. Evi'.

imagery of binary opposition were nothing if not scriptural and consequently almost mandatory for religious discussion.’’[5]

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Moreover, one further fresh influence on religious mentality was an eschatology that radically altered the shape of Augustinian history—a history, we recall, based on antithesis.[91] * * * * [96] The vision of a continuing struggle between opposed communities and aspects of human nature was replaced by expectations of its rapid escalation, imminent climax, and permanent resolution, whether millenarian or apocalyptic. The contrariety that marked the logic of all human actions was felt to be currently at its most uncompromising. The language describing the ‘last days’ became full of images of the violent contrast of opposites.[97] The key to the situation was thought, by Protestant and Catholic alike, to lie in the identification of the Antichrist, a figure representing not merely enmity with Christ or partial repudiation but the complete contradiction of everything Christian. Lambert Daneau, for example, spoke of the Antichrist as ‘thwart and opposite unto Christ’ and of the ‘great Antithesis, or contrarietie’ between their doctrines; the Catholic equivalent was Suarez’s ‘in all things most contrary' to Christ’.[98] Here, the identity between a religious concept and a logical and rhetorical form was complete. The heavyweights of Antichrist scholarship glossed the name by talking about complementary opposition (as something that was both *oppositio* and *aequipollentia)* and about the meaning of other words with the prefix ‘anti-’, including *antiphrasis.* In the Carmelite monk Alessio Porri’s Antichrist tract these included the rhetorical colour ‘antithesis’.[99] Adopting the Aristotelian logical categories, the philosopher Tommaso Campanella pointed out that Antichrist would oppose Christ ‘not... by negation or privation, but by contrariety’.[100] The Lutheran Georg Sohn followed his study of Christ with one of Antichrist, remarking ‘that (according to the common saying) Things contrarie appeare more evidently by their comparison.'[101] And in 1600 the translator John Golburne published two treatises by the Spaniard Cypriano de Valera:

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[91] Collinson, *Puritan Character,* 26.

[96] Fora more detailed discussion of early modern eschatology, including the notion of the Antichrist, see Part III of this book.

[97] According to A. N. Wilder, ‘The Rhetoric of Ancient and Modem Apocalyptic’, *Interpretation,* 25 (1971), 440, the language of apocalyptic panic is invariably couched in ‘antimonies of life and death, light and darkness, knowledge and nescience, order and chaos’. On polarity in apocalyptic thought see also M. H. Abrams, ‘Apocalypse: Theme and Variations’, in C. A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich (eds.), *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, Antecedents and Repercussions* (Manchester, 1984), 345-6.

[98] Lambert Daneau, *A treatise, touching antichrist,* trans. [J. Swan] (London, 1589), 41-4,91, see also 108; Franciscus Suarez, *De Antichristo,* in id., *Opera omnia,* cd. Michel André (28 vols.; Paris, 1856-78), xix. 1032. Cf. John Dove, *A sermon ... mtreating of the second comming of Christ, and the disclosing of Antichrist* (London, n.d. [1594]), sig. D2r; Racmond, *L'Antichrist,* 45-52; George Pacard, *Description de Pantechrist, et de son royaume* (Niort, 1604), 1-10.

[v] Robert Bellarmine, *Tractatus depotestate summipontifeis in rebus temporalibus et de Romanipontiff ecclesiastica hierarchy* in *Bibliotheca maxima pontificia,* ed. Juan Tomas de Rocaberti (21 vols.; Rome, 1698->), xvm. 573; cf Thomas Malvenda, *De antichristo* (Rome, 1604), 3-5; Alessio Porri, *I'aso di I'eritd. ^I^alesicontengonododeciresolutionivereadodeciimportantidubbifattiintornoairoriginenascitavitaopere e morte dell Antichristo* (Venice, 1597), sigs. AP-A2’; Lucas Fernandez de Ayala, *Historia de la perversa vtda.yhorrenda muerte del Antichristo* (Madrid, 1789), 1 (first pub. 1635).

[100] Tommaso Campanella, *De Antichristo,* ed. and trans. Romano Amerio (Rome, 1965), 8.

> Wherein by way of Antithesis, are lively set forth Christ and Antichrist. To the end that two contraries opposed, Christ the true light may appeare more glorious: and Antichrist the child of darkenes may be viewed in his proper colour, that the one may be imbraced with all obedience, and the other abandoned with all detestation and horror.[102]

Other authors (and printers) arranged their pages into juxtaposed columns of 'Christian' and 'Antichristian' attributes, like the Echzell preacher Georg Nigrinus (Schwartz).[103] Much of Nicholas Sanders's vast book, in which he attempted to transfer the charge of antichristianism from the Papacy to heretics and Protestants, consisted of columnar oppositions between the histories and personnel of the Catholic Church and its enemies.[104] Alternating statements about Christ and Antichrist in regular, symmetrical sequences of antithetical phrases, sentences, or paragraphs were made by the Jesuit Benedictus Pcrerius ('Valentini'), the Lutheran Rudolph Walther (Gualtherus), the Marian exile Thomas Bccon, the *ex-ligeur* Jean Boucher, the Welsh cleric Gabriel Powell, and the Spaniard Alonso de Peñafuerte.[105] The results may not have been eloquent, but these expositions were certainly copious and they conformed faithfully to the rhetoricians' definition of *contentio* as a composition of opposite terms. It was impossible to preach Christ, according to William Tyndale, without preaching against Antichrist.[106] The simplest of all versions of this were the Protestant picture-books intended for popular, and not necessarily literate, audiences, of which the prototype was *Passional Christi und Antichristi* with woodcuts by the Saxon court painter and friend of Luther, Lucas Cranach, and text by Philipp Melanchthon. Here, scenes from Christ's life (left-hand page) were printed facing the correspondingly opposite scenes from the career of the Papal Antichrist (right-hand page), usually accompanied by strophic verses under each illustration written in antithetical syntactical and verbal forms.[107]

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[101] Georg Sohn, *A briefe and learned treatise, conteining a true description of the Antichrist,* trans. N. G[rimald] (Cambridge, 1592), 1.

[102] Cypriano de Valera, *Two treatises: the first, of the lives of the popes ... the second, of the masse,* trans. John Golburne (London, 1600), sig. A3*.

[103] Georg Nigrinus [Schwartz], *Lehr, Glaubens, und Lebens Jesu und der Jesuwider, das ist, Christi und Antichristi Gegensatz, Antithesis und Vergleichung* (n.p., 1581), fo. 260 ('Kurtze Antithesis und Gegensatz Christi und dess Antichrists Kirchen, Lehr und Lebens, Handels und Wandels').

[104] Nicholas Sanders, *De visibili monarchia ecclesiae* (Wurzburg, 1592), *passim.*

[105] Benedictus Pererius, *Commentariorum in Danielem prophetam* (Lyons, 1591), 838—42; Rudolph Walther [Gualtherus], *Antichrist, that is to saye: a true reporte, that Antichriste is come,* trans. J[ohn] O[lde] (London, 1556), fos. 98*—108*; Thomas Becon, *The actes of Christe and of Antichrist,* in John Ayre (ed.), *Prayers and Other Pieces of Thomas Becon* (London, 1844), 498-539 (126 antithetical statements concerning the *vitae* of Christ and Antichrist in pt. 1, followed by 100 concerning their doctrines in pt. 2); Boucher, *Couronne mystique,* 366; Gabriel Powell, *Disputationum theologicarum et scholasticarum de Antichristo et eius ecclesia* (London, 1605), 93-5 ('De contrariis Antichristo' in 6 oppositions); Alonso de Pefiafuerte, *Imajeu del Anticristo,* in Ramon Alba (ed.), *Del Antichristo* (Madrid, 1982), 198-202. Further examples in Valera, *Two treatises,* 439-45 (24 'Antitheses').

[106] William Tyndale, *The obedience of a Christian man,* in Henry Walter (ed.), *Doctrinal Treatises ...by William Tyndale* (Cambridge, 1848), 185.

[107] *Passional Christi und Antichristi* (Wittenberg, 1521); for commentary on this text and its influence,

Pictorially and poetically, these were perfect replicas of the religious messages they conveyed. But their crude representations of the end of the Antichrist also foretold the resolution of contrariety itself and the coming of an unpolarized realm of being. The last chapters of the Book of Revelation spoke of the binding or destruction of Satan, the abolition of sin, darkness, and death, and the reconciliation of Alpha and Omega. This, in effect, was to define the New Jerusalem as a state of affairs without privation in order to accentuate its difference in kind from the rest of human experience. In effect, argued Daneau, Manichaeism would be refuted, 'wherein they affirmed that that originall power, which as check-mate, is opposite in all things unto the true God, and to Christ, should be of an everlasting continuance'.[108] But in the mean time, a new edge and urgency was added to the notion of contrariety, both by the dramatic foreshortening of historical perspectives, and the acute anxiety to locate all things in either the Christian or antichristian category.

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see R. W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge, 1981), 149-63; Scribner calls it 'the most successful work of visual propaganda produced by the Reformation' (p. 149). Cf. [Simon du Rosier], *Antithesis Christi et Antichristi, videlicet papae* (Geneva, 1578), see esp. 81-95 for a sequence of paired sentences describing Christ and Antichrist (first pub. *c.* 1552 and trans, into German as *Von des Herm Christi herrlichen thaten, unddesschentlichen Pabsts und Antichrists schedlichen schanden und lastem* (n.p., n.d. [r. 1560]).

[108] Daneau, *Antichrist,* 109, see also 123-4. Cf. on the eschatological resolution of polarity *(coincidentia oppositorum),* Andreas Musculus, *Vom Himel und der Heli* (1559), in Ria Stambaugh (ed.), *Teufelbucher in auswahl*(5 vols.; Berlin, 1970-80), iv. 141-2.

5

Inversion

> Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!
>
> (Isaiah 5:20)

> By definition, a symmetric opposition is reversible at will: its inversion produces nothing. To the contrary, the inversion of an asymmetric opposition is meaningful.
>
> (Louis Dumont, ‘La Communauté anthropologique et l’idéologie’)

In 1604 the English essayist William Cornwallis wrote that ‘man ... cannot judge singlie, but by coupling contrarieties’. And in 1651 Gracián added to *El Criticón* the epigraph: ‘The things of this world can be truly perceived only by looking at them backwards.’[1] The second was as much a consequence of the intellectual and linguistic traits we have been considering as the first. If the world was composed of contraries it was also a reversible world; indeed, this was the only change to which it could conceivably be subject. Grecián, however, says more than he seems to. For if these contraries were also relations of quality—that is, forms of privation of good—then to reverse the world was also to invert it. It was the only alternative to leaving things as they were.[2] ‘All is turned upside downe,’ declared that spawner of contraries, Loys Le Roy, when he came to describe Jwordcr, ‘nothing goeth as it ought.’[3] Here too the age of festive misrule and ritual witchcraft conforms broadly to those other cultures in which asymmetrical oppositions have been prominent. For in these also, inversion has necessarily constituted the principal basis of symbolic transformation.[4]******

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[1] William Cornwallis, *The miraculous and happie union of England and Scotland* (London, 1604), sig. Bi'; Baltasar Gracián, *El Criticón,* ed. M. Romera-Navarro (3 vols. in 2; London, 1938-40), i. 258; ‘... que las cosas del mundo todas se han de mirar al rebés para verlas al derecho[1]; Welles, *Style and Structure in Gracidn’s *El Criticon’,* 157, 165-6. Commentary in Augustin Redondo, ‘Monde a Pcnvers et conscience de crise dans lc “Criticon[11] de Baltasar Gracian[1], in Lafond and Redondo (cds.), *L ’Image du monde renverse,* 83-97.

[2] Barber, *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy,* 213-14; Thomas, *Rule and Misrule,* 34. For many relevant illustrations of the ‘inverted world[1], sec Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture, 13th-18th Centuries,* trans. Eric Nicholson (New York, 1990), 128-36.

’ Le Roy, *Interchangeable course,* fo. 112’.

[4] Sec esp. these essays in Needham (ed.), *Left and Right'.* Alb C. Kruyt, ‘Right and Left in Central Celebes[1],76-8; Peter Rigby, ‘Dual Symbolic Classification among the Gogo of Central Tanzania[1],271-3; Rodney Needham, ‘Right and Left in Nyoro Symbolic Classification[1],306-8,327; James J. Fox, ‘On Bad Death and the Left Hand: A Study of Rotinese Symbolic Inversions[1], 358-62. For a classic study, see Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice,* 271-83 (‘The Kabyle House or the World Reversed[1]); and for the semantics and etymology of symbolic inversion, as well as the significance of cultural negation in general, see Barbara A. Babcock (ed.), *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society* (London, 1978), 13-36.

Its most general purpose is said to be the marking of boundaries and the ascription of‘special, abnormal, or perturbing meanings’.[1] * * * [5] In one account it represents, in particular, the ‘primitive’ person’s attempt to conceptualize disorder.[6] For example, among the Lugbara of Uganda, studied by John Middleton in the 1950s, inversion marked two forms of chaos—the pre-social behaviour of mythical precursors and the extra-social behaviour of strangers and outsiders. The former were asexual or broke sexual taboos, ate their offspring, lived without kin or family, looked inhuman, and performed miracles; the latter were sorcerers and magicians, or incestuous cannibals. It has to be asked of instances like this, why disorder is portrayed by inversion, rather than some other symbolic resource. But in both the case of the Lugbara and the one we are considering the answer is quite obvious. Each of these cultures can be seen to rely extensively on a system of dual classification that represents cosmological and social order as the maintenance of hierarchical oppositions between superior and inferior things—persons, places, activities, and so on. There are even some substantive parallels; the figures of Lugbaran myth act like early modern witches, while those beyond the vicinity of Lugbaran society *are* witches. Beyond the Lugbaran horizon there are even abominable people who walk on their heads.[7]

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Our search for the ‘rccognizability’ of witchcraft can, therefore, move on a further stage with two expectations: that a culture highly sensitive to contrary opposition will, of necessity, be equally sensitive to inversion, and that what inversion means in that culture will have something to do with disorder. Oppositions in complement represent, after all, the benign aspect of dual classification (notably order and beauty), while oppositions inverted represent the malign. Both expectations are more than amply fulfilled by one text alone, a remarkable treatise by a Dominican prior at Padua, Giacomo Affinati D’Acuto. Entitled *Ilmondo alroverscio e sosopra,* its central theme is the introduction into the postlapsarian world, by sin, of contrariety and its corollary, inversion." This is illustrated with reference not merely to human behaviour but relentlessly and exhaustively to every sublunary phenomenon, to the celestial spheres, and to angels and demons. It seems rather niggardly to trace this baroque extravaganza to something as economical as dual classification, but this is in fact the principle at work, even if (because it « a matter of principle) nothing, including D’Acuto’s own language, escapes its embrace. Since the Fall, he argues, everything in the world has had to be maintained in counterweight to its contrary. All things now have negative as well as positive qualities (‘marvellous antitheses’[9])—whereas before there was only unalloyed goodness. Humankind, for instance, has become as base as it is noble, as puny as it is mighty, a shadow as much as a likeness of God. At the same time, contrariety has produced oppositions in social statuses and lifestyles, in beliefs and opinions, and within and between nations—as well as in the behaviour of animals and natural bodies. There is a total confusion of religions, ceremonies, clothes, actions, personalities, languages, arts, and manners.

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[1] Needham, *Symbolic Classification,* 40-1, with many examples; for a case of boundary-marking between moieties, see Valerio Valeri, ‘Reciprocal Centers: The Siwa-Lima System in the Central Moluccas’, in Maybury-Lewis and Almagor (cds.), *Attraction of Opposites,* 135-7.

[6] I lallpikc, *Primitive Thought*, 460.

’ Middleton, ‘Some Categories of Dual Classification’, 369-90; cf. Rodney Needham *Against the Tranquillity of Axioms* (London, 1983), 93-120 (‘Reversals’), for commentary and many further examples

• Giacomo Affinati D’Acuto, *Il mondo al roverscio e sosopra* (Venice, 1602); trans into French by another Dominican, Gaspard Comuerc, *Le Monde renverse san-dessus dessous* (Paris 1610) For a perceptive commentary that emphasizes the formal characteristics of D’Acuto’s use of opposition and inversion see Launay, *'Le Monde renverse san-dessus dessous* de Fra Giacomo Affinati D’Acuto’ 141-52 See also Piero Camporesi, *The Incorruptible Flesh,* trans. Tania Croft-Murray (Cambridge, 1988) 74-5

To an extent, then, D’Acuto was only lamenting the sheer diversity and vicissitude that existed in an imperfect world, qualities that other writers (as we have seen) found not only tolerable but necessary for universal order and stimulating to the imagination. But the Fall had also come about through an act that was itself an inversion—an act of disobedience by which men and women, ‘with a contrary movement, and altogether backwards’, attempted to place themselves above God. Inversion too, therefore, was a feature of the world of sin, a world in which the negative qualities threatened to dominate their positive counterweights, and all things echoed the primal disobedience by reversing their normal roles and relationships. In men and women as individuals and in society as a whole, all the hierarchies were overturned and all the inferior values supplanted their superior opposites. D’Acuto was seldom content with one or two antitheses when twenty might do. After the Fall, he wrote:

> glory was changed into punishment, honour into blame, pleasures into torments, joys into tears, recreations into labours, riches into poverty, abundance into need, light into darkness, love into hate, friendship into disgrace, peace into war, sweetness into bitterness, agreement into quarrels, repose into restlessness, wisdom into folly, prudence into madness, faithfulness into treachery, hope into presumption, mercy into impiety, life into death. Thus, this little world [of human beings] was turned upside-down and backwards.[10]

D’Acuto’s upside-down world is symbolized by those who, deep in sin and in love with material things, ‘have their heads planted in the ground, and tread their feet against the sky’.[11] It is a world where the heavens no longer pour down their beneficial influences, the elements and creatures rebel against each other, the seasons are disordered, the earth is infertile, and monsters and prodigies signify the inversion of nature’s usual patterns. The celestial spheres move in the wrong directions, the stars fall to earth, the seas invade the land, and the rivers run backwards to their sources.

There is, perhaps, nothing comparable to this ‘vast fresco’ of inversionary disorder anywhere in early modern literature.[12] But the catholicity, as well as the popularity, of the motif are confirmed from a rather different direction by the numerous pictorial depictions of the ‘world turned upside-down’ in illustrated broadsheets and chapbooks aimed at simpler tastes. Circulated throughout Europe from the sixteenth to the eighteenth (and even nineteenth) centuries, these prints consisted typically of multiple instances of role reversal among and between humans and animals women made war while their husbands spun, children and servants beat their parents and masters, horses and asses drove their riders, oxen slaughtered butchers, mice ate cats. There were dozens of such scenes, together testifying to the hierarchical relationships most familiar in the lives of ordinary people and the urge to preserve but also to satirize and occasionally challenge them. The mood was quite different from that created by D'Acuto's remorseless moralizing. But the sheer number of variations on the one theme made the same point, often signified by the inclusion of an upside-down globe, that invertibility was the universal idiom of disorderly experience. Nothing could escape its influence, either on behaviour itself or on its symbolism.[13]

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[9] D’Acuto, *Mondo alroverscio.* 128. [10] Ibid. 131-2. [11] Ibid. 235.

[12] The description is Launay’s, *'Le Monde renverse* 142. The ‘moral order’ implications of the world turned upside-down in Lutheranism are discussed by Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk.* 164-8.

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The very inclusiveness of this idea guaranteed the general cogency of something like witchcraft, built as the latter was on systematic, ritualized overturning. But what made witchcraft recognizable as disorder of a certain kind was familiarity with inversions in the specific idiom which it is best to call 'political'. To be sure, there was a politics in the 'world turned upside-down'; in it the roles of the dominant and the dominated were always exchanged. D'Acuto's vision, too, presupposed a world held in place by obedience and made chaotic by its opposite. Since *concordia discors* conformed to divine laws of proportion, accounts of universal contrariety were invariably couched in the language of government. Thus Bishop Goodman traced the origin of all authority to God's insistence, in the cases of the very first enmities in Genesis, that the body be subject to the soul, the flesh to the spirit, and women to men.[14] Inversion in whatever context, then, was necessarily a political act.

Nevertheless, in the life of actual societies and states it was resonant with special meaning. These were institutions modelled on the divine paradigm, harmonizing contrarieties of status, interest, and fortune by patriarchal and princely powers that were either historical derivations from or closely analogous with God's own rule. Here the image of the world upside-down was peculiarly persuasive. By analogy it endowed acts of social disorder with a significance far beyond their immediate character, attributing to them repercussions in every other plane of government. And by antithesis it offered the opportunity of defending order *a contrariis* in relation to a situation in which all the normal patterns of authority were simply inverted. In the case of order/disorder, with which, in one guise or another, sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century writers were often preoccupied, we are dealing, then, not with a polarity like any other but with the primary polarity of Christian political thought. The characterization of disorder by inversion, even in relatively minor texts or on

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[11] The genre is conveniently summarised by David Kunzle, 'World Upside Down: The Iconoeranhv of a European Broadsheet Type', tn Babcock (cd.), *Reversible World,* 39-94. For further commentary and examples, sec Die *Verkehrte Welt/Le Monde renverse/The Topsy-Turvy World,* Catalogue of an Exhibition at the Goethe Institute, London (Munich, 1985); Chartier, *Cultural History,* 115-26- Helen F Grant •The World Upside-Down', in R. O. Jones (ed.), *Studies in Spanish Literature of the Golden she Presented to EdwardM. Wilson* (London, 1973), 103-35. *J <'0,aen'ig' ' resented*

[14] Goodman, *Fall of man,* 251.

ephemeral occasions, may therefore be taken to exemplify an entire metaphysic. Here lay the more precise linguistic and symbolic conventions for making sense of witchcraft.[15]

One obvious instance is that of comparisons between the prince and the tyrant, where the argument, in both logic and content, was modelled on seminal accounts of monarchy given by Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas. The qualities and duties of the prince, deduced from theological and moral postulates, were portrayed in terms of the perfectly virtuous man governing in an ideal situation. This exemplary ruler was contrasted with his opposite, whose government was in every respect contrary to the good; hence the emergence of a *speculumprincipum* tradition in political theory, history-writing, and drama in which descriptions of tyranny rested on nothing more than a species of inversion.[16] In a typical discussion in his *CItristianiprincipis institutio* (1516), Erasmus argued that the actions of the true monarch and of the tyrant were at opposite ends of every moral continuum and could not therefore be separately conceived or taught; a tyrant was simply one who turned every rule of political life upside-down.[17] James I too thought that understanding the ‘trew difference betwixt a lawfull good King, and an usurping Tyran’ was a case of invoking the usual maxim about contrariety, *opposita iuxta seposita magis elucescunt,* and setting out the ‘directly opposite’ aims, policies, and just deserts of each.[18] The most sustained attempt to capture in rhetorical figuration the inversions thought to constitute the actions of the tyrant was in a series of antithetical contrasts repeated by at least three French authors, Jean Bodin, Pierre de La Primaudaye, and Nicolas Barnaud, and one Englishman, Charles Mcrbury. In Barnaud’s *Le Miroirdesfrancois* it begins:

> the king conforms himself to the laws of nature, while the tyrant treads them underfoot; the one maintains religion, justice, and faith, the other has neither God, faith, nor law; the one does all that he thinks will serve the public good and safety of his subjects, the other does nothing except for his particular profit, revenge, or pleasure; the one strives to enrich his subjects by all the means he can think of, the other improves his own fortune only at their expense; the one avenges the public injuries and pardons those against himself, the other cruelly avenges his own and pardons those against others; the one spares the honour of chaste women, the other triumphs in their shame.

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[15] Catherine Bclscy, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London, 1985), 94, speaks of Tudor and Stuart political arguments having in common ‘a tendency to fix difference as antithesis, to restrict the imaginable possibilities to two: on the one hand, this government, or on the other, no government, the present order or its opposite, which is always chaos’.

[u] St Thomas Aquinas, *De regimine principum,* in *Aquinas: Selected Political Writings,* ed. A. P. d’Entrèves (Oxford, 1948), 15. On the tradition in general, see A. H. Gilbert, *Machiavelli's 'Prince'and its Forerunners: 'The Prince' as a Typical Book 'De Regimine Principum'* (Durham, NC, 1938), *passim;* Gillian Jondorf, *Robert Gamier and the Themes of Political Tragedy in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1969), 61-2; W. A. Armstrong, ‘The Elizabethan Conception of the Tyrant’, *Rev. English Stud.* 22 (1946), 161-81.

[17] Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince,* trans. L. K. Born (New York, 1936), 150,156—65.

’• James VI and I, *The workes of the most high and mighty prince, fames* (London, 1616), 155-6; cf. Jacques Hurault, *Trois Livres des offices d'estat, avec un sommaire des stratagemes,* 2nd edn. (Geneva, 1596), 10-13,149-370.

There is no need to complete what is in fact a much longer passage to grasp both the aptness of the rhetorical device and the conceptual language presupposed in writing about politics in this way.[19] What happened when a real monarch was portrayed in terms of such stylized oppositions is seen in the case of Henri III of France.[20]

A second example is that of descriptions of disobedience itself. Often these were limited to the citing of commonplace parallels between the resistance of subjects to princes, children to parents, and servants to masters. But that this was a shorthand implying unspoken assumptions about a whole world upside-down can be seen from the elaborate account in which the Marian Catholic John Christopherson condemned the rebelliousness consequent upon liberty of conscience:

> dyd [not] children order their parentes, wyves their husbandes, and subjects their magistrates: so that the fete ruled the head and the cart was set before ye horse?... was not al thinges through it brought so farre out of order, that vice ruled vertue, and folishnes ruled wisdome, lightnesse ruled gravitie, and youth ruled age? So that the olde mens saying was herein verified, that when Antichrist shulde come, the rootes of the trees shulde growe upwarde. Was there not beside, such deadly dissention for our diversitie in opinions, that even amonges those, that were mooste verye deare frendes, arose moste grevouse hatred. For the sonne hated hys owne father, the sister her brother, the wyfe her husband, the servaunte hys mayster, the subject the ruler.[21]

James I used the same idiom to describe the misrule that would result from papal claims to obedience: ‘the world itselfe must be turned upside downe, and the order of Nature inverted (making the left hand to have the place before the right, and the last named to bee first in honour) that this primacie may be maintained.’[22] Another argument, typical in its verbal patterning, was Christopher Goodman’s claim that when a man confused obedience with its ‘playne contrarie’, then ‘in place of justice, he receaveth injustice, for right wronge, for vertue vice, for lawe will, for love hatred, for trueth falshod, for playne dealing dissimulation, for religion superstition, for true worshippe detestable idolatrie: and to be shorte, for God Sathan, for Christ Antichrist.’[23]

Similar ways of thinking and writing marked the pamphlet literature of the French wars of religion—and, indeed, of other great upheavals like the German

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[19] Barnaud, *Le Miroir des francois*, 69-70; Jean Bodin, *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale*, trans. Richard Knolles, ed. Kenneth D. McRae (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), 212-13 (facsimile of the 1606 edn.); La Primaudaye, *French academie*, 601; Charles Merbury, *A briefe discourse of royall monarchie* (London, 1581), 13-15. Cf. Jean de Marconville, *La Manière de bien policer la republique chrestienne* (Paris, 1562), fo. 12-; [illegible], *Miroüer du prince chrétien*, Dedication.

[20] Keith Cameron, *Henri III: A Maligned or Malignant King?* (Exeter 1978) 8-13.

[21] John Christopherson, *An exhortation to alle menne to take hede and beware of rebellion* (London, 1554), sigs. [illegible]

[22] James VI and I, *Works*, 307.

[23] Christopher Goodman, *How superior powers oght to be obeyed of their subjects* (Geneva, 1558), [illegible]; cf. John Cheke, *The hurt of sedition* (1549), in *Holinshed’s Chronicles*, ed. H. Ellis, 6 vols. (London, 1807-8), iii. 1003; Anon., *A remedy for sedition* (London, 1536), sig. Aii.

Reformation and the English civil wars. Artus Desire went so far as to attribute all France's ills to a failure of patriarchal discipline which, apart from producing upside-down families, led, via providential punishment, to a society so corrupted:

> that today one takes the priest for adventurer and the adventurer for priest, the lord for villein and the villein for lord, the magistrate for constable and the constable for magistrate, the good woman for wanton and the wanton for good woman; in short, all is so turned upside-down that one can no longer tell the one from the other.[24]

Antoine Loisel matched Goodman's point exactly when he said that despite compelling reasons for order and obedience there were those 'whose judgement is so inverted that they call war peace, disunity unity, and discord concord'.[25] Similar arguments came from antagonists on all sides. The Parisian magistrate Guillaume Aubert used stylistic antithesis to describe how sectarian militance had turned the principles of Christian pacificism upside-down. Pierre de Belloy, supporter of Henri de Navarre, associated rebellion with a universal overturning symbolized by the inversions that characterized Augustine's *civitas terrena*[2]*. In such reactions to the disobedience thought to be inseparable from variety in religious or political allegiances we can also distinguish a conventional rhetoric of disorder.[27]

In a third context inversion was used to reinforce the same political point by its realization in the actions of symbolic personae. It is no longer strange to read late Renaissance court festivals for their sometimes esoteric political meanings.[28] * * * They were conceived by the greatest artists of the period as statements about the power of royal authority to bring order and virtue to human engagements. It was supposed that princes and courtiers who acted their ideal selves in suitable allegorical situations could, with a proper blending of artistic, poetic, musical, and balletic resonances, draw down the principles of world harmony into the commonwealth. The 'device' would often move, therefore, from a representation of civil and moral disorder to its transformation, and then to scenes of homage to, or apotheosis of, royalty. This simple antithesis gave unity to the spectacle and, since it was emphasized by contrasts in speech, dance, costume, and even gesture, offered opportunities for extended experimentation with modes of inversion. In the major *ballets* at the French court, kings were seen to rescue the world from uncertainty, ambiguity, and illusion and from threats of overturning *(renversemenf)* by those wielding metamorphic powers. One such figure was Circe, who in the *Balet comique de la royne* (1581) changed men into beasts, depriving them of their reason, and charmed popular opinion into confusing the benefits of peace with the perils of war. Another was Alcine, who in the *Ballet de Monseigneur le Due de Vandosme* (1610) turned men's faculties upside-down by an inordinate desire for pleasure, and their actual shapes into grotesqueries. Victims of such enchantments occur in several other *ballets* where they are also delivered by agents of the counter-magic embodied in royal valour, wisdom, and beauty. There are complete entertainments where *le monde renversets* not resolved. A whole French *ballet* with this title and theme was staged in 1624, and during the carnival of 1638 at the court of Philip IV of Spain topsy-turvydom was made farcical in the form of the royal ministers and courtiers dressed as women.” But in the context of the whole genre, a world peopled by figures that, as Jean Roussct suggested, were 'always ready to turn themselves suddenly into their opposite', survived despite the intentions of kings.[30]

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[24] Artus Desire, *L 'Origine et source de tous les maux de ce monde par I "incorrection des peres et meres enters leurs enfant, et de ftnobedience d'iceux* (Paris, 1571), fo. 36*.

[25] Antoine Loisel, *Homonoee, ou de I'accord et union des subjects du roy soubs son obeissance* (Paris, 1595), 98,103; Loisel's address at the opening of the judicial sessions at Perigueux in 1583 is a detailed application of Pythagorean and Neoplatonist doctrines of *concordia discors* to the situation of contemporary France.

[24] Guillaume Aubert, *Oraison de lapaix et les moyensde I'entrelenir* (Paris, 1559), 11; Pierre de Belloy, *De Tauthoritedu roy et crimes de leze-majeste* (n.p., 1587), 6-7,26'. Cf. Guillaume Des Autels, *Harengue au peuplefrancois contre la rebellion* (Paris, 1560), fo. 16', who said that rebels were reviving the 'good old times of Saturn'.

[27] For further examples, sec Jean de Marconville, *Recueil memorable d'aucuns cas merveilleux advenuz de noz ans, et d "aucunes choses estranges et monstrueuses advenues es sieclespassez* (Paris, 1564), fos. 1^{r}-14^{r}, 16'; Loys Le Roy, *Derexcellencedugouvernement royal* (Paris, 1575), fos. 45,48-'; Yves-Marie Berce, 'La Fascination du monde renverse dans les troubles du XVI* siecle', in Lafond and Redondo (eds.), *L'lmage du monde renverse* $_{y}$ 9-15.

[21] For a detailed treatment of the demonological themes in court festivals, and particularly of enchantment and disenchantment, sec below', Ch. 42.

In the case of the Jacobean and Caroline masque this antipathy was always quite patent. Ben Jonson and his imitators deliberately emphasized the contrariness of disorder by making it the subject of prefatory 'anti-masques' in which the codes of political morality celebrated in the body of the masque were represented in antithesis. The logical mood of the whole entertainment was thus explicitly that of the argument *a contrariis* (what Elizabeth Cook calls a form of 'negative definition') that virtue was 'More seen, more known when vice stands by';[31] while the highly elaborate inversions in anti-masque characterization and situation drew clearly on popular as well as learned conceptions of misrule. In *Time vindicated to himself* (1623) figures representing impertinent curiosity demand a saturnalian riot where slaves, servants, and subjects 'might do and talk all that they list'; 'Let's have the giddy world turned the heels upward, And sing a rare black Sanctus, on his head, Of all things out of order.'[32] The theme of giddiness is repeated in *Love's triumph through Callipolis* (1631), a masque that praises perfect love in the guise of the queen but opens with depraved lovers whose lives arc 'a continued vertigo'.[33] Misrule appears

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” Paul Lacroix, *Ballett et mascarades de eour de Henri III d Louit XlV((>v0\s*.- Paris 1868) iii Sl-8- Hannah E. Bergman, 'A Court Entertainment of \(M\ *Hispanic Rev.* 42 (1974) 67—81 ' ” * '

[30] Margaret M. McGowan, *L'Art du ballet de cour en France, 1581–1643* (Paris, 1963), *passim*, esp. 42–7, 69–84, 101–15, 133–53; J. Rousset, 'Circé et le monde renversé: fêtes et ballets de cour à l'époque baroque', *Trivium* [Schweizerische Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Stilkritik], 4 (1946), 31–53 (quotation at 41); cf. id., *Littérature de l'âge baroque en France*, 13–31; Maurice Lever, 'Le Monde renversé dans le ballet de cour', in Lafond and Redondo (eds.), *L'Image du monde renversé*, 107–15. For the continuation of the theme in 18th–c. French *théâtre de la foire*, see Rex, *Attraction of the Cont* 9–72.

'* S. Orgcl and R. Strong (eds.), /mgojonrr; *The Theatre of the Stuart Court (2v0\s* ■ LoS? W73) i. 288; Elizabeth Cook, * "Death proves them all but toyes": Nashe's Unidcalisintr Shn > • r» •'i r • i' ley (cd.), *The Court Masque* (Manchester, 1984), 23. Umdcalismg Show , in David Lind-

[32] Orgcl and Strong (eds.), *Inigo Jones,* 350-2.

[31] Ibid. i. 406.

as an actual character in *Christmas his masque* (1616), as well as in the familiarity with which stage Irishmen address the king in *The Irish masque* (1613).[34] This is a world in which people not only act out opposites but also ‘know things the wrong way’.[35] In *Salmacida spolia* (1640) the blessings of civil concord secured by Prince Philogenes cannot be truly perceived in an anti-masque society so corrupt that the nobility no longer protects, the poor no longer serve, and religion has become a vice. Even the dreams of anti-masquers are appropriately disordered; in *The vision ofdelight* (1617) Fant’sy asks: ‘If a dream should come in now to make you afeard, With a windmill on his head and bells at his beard, Would you straight wear your spectacles here at your toes, And your boots o’ your brows, and your spurs o’ your nose?’[36] One surviving costume design by Inigo Jones strikingly captures these visions; it depicts a ‘double woman’ who is half a figure of beauty and half a hag.[37]

With such creatures only symbolic confrontation was possible. In *Oberon* (1611) moonlit obscurity, mischievous satyrs, irresponsible hedonism, and unchaste language represent an indecorum and unruliness that must vanish before the brilliance, propriety, and solemnity of Oberon’s homage to the Arthurian king-emperor. And in *Pan's anniversary* (1620) it is the grossness and presumption of delinquent ‘Boeotians’ that bears no comparison, except one of antithesis, with the world of the ‘Arcadians’, ‘persons so near deities ... taught by Pan the rites of true society’.[38] Such contrasts were heightened in each case by matching styles of expression in the language of music and dance as well as in scenery and costume. One anti-masque measure in *Coelum Britannicum* (1634) even consisted of‘retrograde paces’; others were ‘distracted’, extravagant’, ‘antic’, and accompanied by ‘contentious music’ or ‘strange music of wild instruments’. The elaboration of an upside-down world was in fact complete, pointing up with fullest possible effect a conception of kingship as the only power capable of setting it to right.[39]

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However extravagant and stylized these various representations of disorder may seem, it would be mistaken to think of them as less meaningful than those attempted from the vantage of (say) a tradition of empiricism in political debate. They were

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[M] Graham Parry, *The Golden Age Restor'd: The Culture of the Stuart Court, 1603-42* (Manchester, 1981),63n.8.

[”] Orgel and Strong (eds.), *Inigo Jones,* i. 366. [**] Ibid. i. 272. [”] Ibid. i. 390.

[M] Ibid. i. 318.

[”] Especially helpful on the anti-masque and its sometimes complex relation to the main masque are S. Orgel, *The Jonsonian Masque* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), *passim;* John C. Meagher, *Method and Meaning in Jonson's Masques* (London, 1966), 51-5; W. Todd Furniss, ‘Ben Jonson’s Masques’, in id., *Three Studies in the Renaissance: Sidney, Jonson, Milton* (New Haven, 1958), 89-179; Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics ofLiterature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge, 1987), 179-264. For the origins of the court masque in traditions of carnival misrule, see E. Welsford, *The Court Masque* (Cambridge, 1927),3-167,P.Reyhcr, *Les Masques anglais (Paris,* 1909; repr. New York, 1964), 1-107, and Leah S. Marcus, *The Politics ofMirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes* (London, 1986), 14-16,33-5,76-85. On the antithesis between princely power and festive disorder, see Bristol, *Carnival and Theater,* 59-62. Stephen Kogan, *The Hieroglyphic King: Wisdom and Idolatry in the Seventeenth-Century Masque* (London, 1986), 81, deals with the masque theme of *concordia discors,* and see also 90-107 on the anti-masque.

entailed by a metaphysical system with its own criteria of what was real. It was precisely the ability of *ballets de cour* and masques (as spectacles inspired by a Neoplatonic conception of art) to bridge the disjunction between the ideal and the actual—between anti-masque and main masque[40]—that made them so popular with their royal and aristocratic patrons. Likewise, the apparently purely literary devices of verbal and syntactical antithesis employed in writings on tyranny and rebellion were those thought to be immanent in the language of all evil acts. These necessarily manifested a divine logic and therefore could be properly conceived of in no other way. To link disobedience with inversions of natural phenomena or with discordant music is assuredly not our way of talking about disorder in political arrangements; but these were inescapable corollaries of an organic view of a world made coherent not merely by analogous operations at each of its many levels but by actual chains of cause and effect. That trees might grow with their roots in the air, or left-handedness take priority, were, in themselves, potent images. But the visual symbolism of the court revel not only suggested moral and political truths—it attempted to effect them in the manner of a talismanic magic. Thus, while the world upside-down undoubtedly became a topos of purely literary or iconographical reference, we should not underestimate its original appeal as a description of real events consequent upon acts of sin.

Nor can we neglect its power in enabling early modern Europeans to label specific cultural opponents and condemn their activities as disorderly. Just as there were accusations of heretical inversions throughout the medieval centuries, so there were charges of Huguenot inversions in the later sixteenth century.[41] Protestants replied in kind by casting the Catholic Antichrist as an apocalyptic overturner.[42] Atheists, despised by everybody, were, in some Englishmen's eyes, the 'Antipodes' of religious believers.[41] 'They invert', preached one of them, 'the Order God hath disposed to the times preposterously, makeing the night day, and the day night; at midnight they revell, at noone they sleepe: though the day was created for labour, the night for repose.'[44] It is still a matter of debate whether those Interregnum antinomians, the 'Ranters', were more a projection of deviance than a matter of fact. Contemporary accounts of their alleged activities resemble so closely the ritual inversions habitually associated with religious enemies as to suggest (to J. C. Davis at least) not the reporting of real events but the workings of ‘more universal cognitive and declaratory processes’/[5] And while there can be no doubt about the existence of real ‘rogues’ in early modem Italy, they too were labelled according to the stereotypes of the world upside-down.[45 46]

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[40] Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment,* 199-211.

[41] Michel de Castelnau, Sieur de La Mauvissiere, who reported them, commented on their similarity to charges against the early Christians and the Templars and the possibility that they were therefore stereotypical fabrications. But he still says: 'Quoi qu'il en fut, lorsque l'on menoit executer des protestants, quelques-uns diso.ent qu'ils mangeoient les petits enfans'; 'Memoires de Michel de Castelnau' in J.F. Michaud and J. J. F.Poujoulat (eds.^u velle collection des mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France, 1st ser. (12 vols.; Pans 1836-9), ix. 410-11; cf. Artus Desire, *La Singerie des Huguenots Marmots et Guenons de la noutelle derriston Theodobeszienne* (Paris, 1574), 8. For other similar references see A N Galpem, *The Religions of the People in Sixteenth-Century Champagne* (Cambridge Mass 19761 143- Philip Benedict, 'The Catholic Response to Protestantism', in J Obelkevich *Rrl'io' JLD I* Obelkev.ch, *Rehg.on and the People, 800-1700,* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1979), 171.

[42] See below, Ch. 23.

[41] Michael Hunter, 'The Problem of "Atheism" in Early Modern England' *D m^nA iTrans.RoyalHtst.Soci-* r/y, 5th scr. 35(1985), 147; cf. Kors,/4/AeM/n in France, 50.

[44] ThomasAdams,77ie$_{J?}$a//an/rAWen(London, 1612),fos. 16',seealso21» 1 22 'cf Drcton. *Good and the badde,* 21-2.

When Europeans confronted the cultures of other lands their reactions were filtered in the same way by the same representational practices. The ‘cannibal’ was one outcome,[47] the ‘antipodean’ another.[48] But the New World ‘witch’ was a third. In 1585 the Huguenot pastor Jean de Lery added to an edition of his *Histoire d’un voyagefaict en la terre du Bresil* Bodin’s description of the sabbat, concluding that Brazilian women in their religious rites and European witches in theirs ‘were guided by the same spirit of Satan’.[49] In 1609 his Catholic countryman Jude Serclier interpreted the entire festival calendar of the Mexicans as a series of sabbat-like *singeries.*[50] We have reached the point where the demonic world upside-down becomes intelligible as both actual and symbolic transformation.

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[45] J. C. Davis,‘Fear, Myth and Furore: Reappraising the “Ranters” *'.Past and Present,* 129(1990),86; cf. id., *Fear, Myth and History: The Ranters and the Historians* (Cambridge, 1986), 94-125.

[46] Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology ofEarly Modem Italy; Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge, 1987), 65-71.

[47] Frank Lestringant, ‘Le Cannibale et ses paradoxes. Images du cannibalisme au temps des Guerres de Religion*, *Mentalities,* 1 (1983), 4-19; Philip P. Boucher, *Cannibal Encounters: Europeans and Island Caribs, 1492-1763* (London, 1992), 6-10,13-28.

[41] Claude Kappler, *Monst res, demons et merveilles a la fin du moyen age* (Paris, 1980), 39-40; *Neves, true neves, laudable neves, citie neves, court nevs, countrey neves: The vorld is mad, or it is a mad vorld my masters, especially nov vhen in the Antipodes these things are come to passe* (London, 1642), 2-3 (in the context of a satire on contemporary England).

[47] Jean de Lery, *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Bresil,* 3rd cdn. (Geneva, 1585), 280-1; Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the Nev World (Oxlord,* 1991), 14-19. The literature on the demonization of New World religions is now very extensive; on the use of polarity and inversion motifs in particular, see Laura de Mello e Souza, ‘The Devil in Brazilian History’, *Portuguese Stud.* 6 (1990), 85-93; Peter Mason, *Deconstructing America: Representations of the Other* (London, 1990), 51-60; Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru* (Princeton, 1991), 28-35,39-49,55-63,137,225-48; Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the Nev World: The Impact of Diabolism in Nev Spain* (London, 1994), 25; Kenneth Mills, *Idolatry and its Enemies* (provisional title, forthcoming), ch. 5. For demonization in general, see Irene Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru* (Princeton, 1987), 159-96. According to Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History,* trans. Tom Conley (Chichester, 1988), 242 n. 52, the ‘same structures’ were common to demonology and early travel literature.

[w] Serclier, *L Antidemon historial,* 339-46,512-14.

6

The Devil, God’s Ape

> And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.
>
> (Genesis 3:15)

> The devil... has his word, he has (if I may say this) his sacraments, and he has a spirit, which works through his word and sacraments. To these he adds various theatrical gestures *(gestus Histrionicus)* and actions, like ceremonies.
>
> (Niels Hemmingsen, *Admonitio de superstitionibus magicis vitandis)*

> It can at least be entertained that a symbolic classification calls not only for ritual expression but even for a degree of histrionic exaggeration of its main categories, and that an extreme form of such dynamic sustenance may be found in a resort to reversal.
>
> (Rodney Needham, *Against the Tranquillity of Axioms)*

DEMONIC witchcraft made sense, then, in a world of meanings structured by opposition and inversion; these were the genera! conditions for ‘knowing’ witches. Writing about them could be defended as the appreciation of the highest virtues by the simultaneous exploration of the filthiest vices. ‘In the actions of our life’, wrote Sir Philip Sidney, ‘who sceth not the filthiness of evill, wanteth a great foile to perceive the bewtie of vertue.’[1] In fact, demonology was a rather pure case of the argument *a contrariis.* For the devil was not just another component of the representational schemes we have been exploring; he was one of the foundations. ‘Unity rests in God’, it was said by a Frenchman, ‘duality *(le binaire)* in Satan.’[2] ‘Christ and Satan are enemies’, wrote an Alcalá theologian, ‘a fact demonstrated by comparing the actions of one with those of the other—they are antithetical.’[3] In narrative terms, polarity and contrariety were both blamed on the Fall and thus on its perpetrator; it was the opinion of Christopher Lever, for example, that ‘before that sinne made this alteration in the state of things, there was no opposition.’[4] Nor, as we have seen, was there inversion. An illustration in Scupoli’s *The spiritual conflict* depicted the prince of darkness ‘inthron’d, as sole Monark of this inverted Universe, in opposition to God and all goodness’.[5]

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[1] Sir Philip Sidney, *The defence of poesie* (London, 1595), sig. E4*.

[2] Raemond, *L'Antichrist,* 349-50; cf. Louis Roland, *De la dignité du roy* (Paris, 1623), 22.

* Pedro Ciruelo, *A Treatise Reproving all Superstitions and Forms of Witchcraft Very Necessary and Usefulfor all Good Christians Zealous for their Salvation,* trans. E. A. Maio and D’O W Pearson ed D’O. W. Pearson (London, 1977), 274; originally pub. as *Reprobación de las superstition"yhechicerias* etc.^ probably in 1530.

[4] C[hristopher] L[cver], *Heaven and Earth, Religion and Policy* (London, 1608), 18.

’ [Scupoli], *Christian pilgrime,* ‘The subject of the spirituall conflict’ (no pagination).

If early modern thought was pervaded by dual classifications of things ‘positive’ and things ‘negative’, this was due in no small measure to the absolute primacy of the opposition between God and his adversary and its asymmetrical, yet complementary’, character. Encompassment, after all, is only anti-Manichaeism by another name. The polarizing of religious experience in the same period, with its demonizing of religious opponents and its preoccupation with the Antichrist, also testifies to the formative power of Christian dualism, as well as to the enormous extension of interest in the demonic that marked the theology and eschatology of the two reformations. That good princes and tyrants were contraries was, likewise, unavoidable if it was also a commonplace that the first was the image of God and the second the image of the devil. To an extent, therefore, early modern demonology' cannot be traced to dual classification without some circularity of argument; it could hardly have taken any other form. In this respect, the archetypal demonology was not the now much-analysed *Malleus maleficarum* but Book 5 of Alphonsus de Spina’s *Fortalitium fidei,* entitled ‘De bello demonum contra fidei fortalicum’. Spina was confessor to Juan II of Castile and a Salamanca theologian, and he became bishop of Orense. His book was reissued many times down to 1525, making it initially as popular as the *Malleus,* but Spina adopted an Augustinian, rather than a Thomistic, shape for the section on demons, magic, and witchcraft. At its centre was a portrait of human history as a war between the ‘city of God’, with its perfections, and the ‘city of Babylon’, with its contrary corruptions: the latter included ‘the unjust prince, the sycophantic courtier, the soldier without loyalty, the councillor without sincerity, the commissary without devotion, the kinsman without love, the greedy lawyer, the ignorant cleric, the proud priest, the false merchant, the youth without modesty, and the people without friendship.’ From this struggle sprang the demonic assaults and deceptions that currently troubled the fortress of the faith.[6]

* * *

There remains, however, the step that completed the textual construction of witchcraft and guaranteed its familiarity to early modern readers. Programmed to relate contraries by juxtaposing them, and aware of the modes of inversion that threatened, yet confirmed, a world of invertible values, they still had to grasp the significance of specific transgressions. Devils and witches turned particular things upside-down in particular ways. It was up to their audiences to explain the choices and interpret the meanings by reading into each individual performance an actual or symbolic inversion of a traditional form of life. This would not, admittedly, have been very difficult. The early modern devil was a profligate parodist; his capacity for dissimulation, true to the baroque spirit, was endless. His trope was irony, carried to the lengths of

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[4] Alphonsus de Spina, *Fortalitiumfidei*(Strasburg, n.d. [before 1471]), sigs. Kvii-Li^{r} (quotation at Kvii’); Joseph Hansen, *Quellen und Untenuchungen zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns und der Hexenverfolgung im Mil tela I ter* (Bonn, 1901), 145, gives 1459 as date of composition, and H. C. Lea, *Materials toward a History of Witchcraft*, ed. A. C. Howland, intro. G. L. Burr (3 vols.; London, 1957), i. 285, gives 1458-60. For a relatively rare invocation of Christian bipolarity in the context of actual witch hunts, see Rainer Decker, ‘Die Hcxenverfolgungen im Hochstift Paderborn’, *Westfdlische Zeitschrift.* 128 (1978), 354.

hyperbole. He was God's ape, 'one that faines to imit[a]te him though in contrary wayes', said John Gaule,[7] and irony, for all contemporary theorists of language, was associated with counterfeiting, dissembling, and taunting in speech *(etron* — a dissembler). It was, said one rhetorician, 'the mocking Trope', the trope of derision; another questioned whether it was not a form of lying by illusion.[8] Above all, irony was the trope of contrariety—not simply saying one thing and meaning another but 'when one contrary is signified by another'. 'It consists', wrote the court intellectual Rene Bary, 'in persuading the contrary of what it literally signifies." This accords exactly with the witchcraft writer James Mason's remark that 'Satan and his ministers, the sorcerers, will seeme to doe the same [as God): albeit they have alwaies another, yea a contrary entent and meaning.'[10]

Witchcraft was, in consequence, an expansive forest of symbols. The witches' sabbat, especially, was rich in messages, based (an anthropologist might say) on extensive correlations between the negative items of the dual classifications of the period.[11] Its inversionary rituals were also extravagant and excessive—and, therefore, unmistakable. An audience would be alerted to irony, according to rhetorical theory, when the manner of utterance or the utterance itself was somehow 'wrong' for what was being said.[12] But the deeds of witches were 'wrong' on a spectacular scale. In fact, they conform so well to Rodney Needham's remark about the role of histrionic exaggeration in expressing the categories of symbolic classification that they might even have been designed for the purpose.

* * *

We can judge irony, it is said, 'only in a context'.[13] And the main idiom of demonic irony was, of course, religious. Witchcraft had all the appearance of a proper religion but in reality it was religion perverted. And since genuine religion was, in theory, a total experience, so its demonic copy was all-embracing.[14] This had been the case historically, it was argued, with the ancient idol cults trying to emulate the true faith of the Old Testament. It was also still assumed to be true in the early seventeenth century; ‘God has His rites ... the devil his... God has His shrines, the devil his ... God his martyrs, the devil his’, and so on through the gamut of piety and observance.[11] * * * [15] To know how the latter was worshipped, according to a modern view, ‘one needed only to know what true religion was, and turn it inside out.’[16] This is not as glib as it sounds. In 1627, at the end of his *A guide to grand-jury men,* the English preacher Richard Bernard tried to make witchcraft intelligible in tabular form by presenting his readers with matching lists of, first, ‘What the Lord doth’, and, then, ‘What Satan doth’, facing one another as antitheses across the open pages of his book. Each pair of items, positive and negative, was to be read in numerical sequence, beginning with ‘The Lord hath his set Assemblies for his servants to meet together/So the Divell hath his set meetings for his Magicians and Witches to come together’, and ending (at no. 29) with ‘The Lord hath promised earthly blessings, to stirre up people to serve him/So Satan is large in his promises to such as will serve him’.[17]

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[7] John Gaule, *Select cases of conscience touching witches and witchcrafts* (London, 1646), 68-9.

[8] J.S., *Mysterie of rhelorique,* 38; Clemens Timpler, *Rhetoricae systema methodicum ... perpraecepta et fuaestiones ... declaratur* (Hanau, 1613), 347-8. For the history *of diabolussimia Dei,* see H. W. Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (London, 1952), 13-27.

[9] Bary, *Rheloriqueftanfoise,* 295; cf. J.S., *Mysterie of rhelorique,* 38; Antoine Fouquelin, *La Rhelorique francoise* (Paris, 1557), fo. 8'; Timpler, *Rhetoricae systema methodicum,* 344-6 ('modo tropus ab opposito ad oppositum'); Marcus Beumlerus, *Elocutionis rhetoricae* (Zurich, 1598), 56.

[10] James Mason, *Theanatomieofsorcerie: wherein the wicked impiety of charmers, inchanters, and such like is discovered and confuted* (London, 1612), 59.

[11] For one of the few attempts at an analysis of such correlations in early modem conceptions of demonism (though not in the context of the sabbat), see Francois Azouvi, 'The Plague, Melancholy and the Devil', *Diogenes,* 108 (1979), 112-30. Nicole Jacques-Chaquin, 'Feux sorciers', *Terrain,* 19 (1992), 6-8, considers the symbolism of demonic fire in the context of 'the complex oppositions that structured the Christian concept of the devil'. Accounts, similar to mine, of the classificatory dualisms and inversionary motifs in witchcraft are in Rowland, ' "Fantasticall and Devilishe Persons" ', 165-9; lames L. Brain, 'An Anthropological Perspective on the Witchcraze', and Allison P. Couden, 'The Myth of the Improved Status of Protestant Women: The Case of the Witchcraze', both in Jean R Brink Allknn P S'Ud m ooV'd Marya T ? SoWitZ *(CdS)' Th' P0li,i" ofGenJer in Earl> Modern ^ope* (Kirksville; Mo., 1989), see esp. 15-ZU, oS-7.

[12] Fouquelin, *Rhetoriquefrancoise,* fo. 9f.

[13] Rosemond Tuvc, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery* (Chicago, 1947) 205

[14] FrijhofT, 'Official and Popular Religion in Christianity', 91.

It was in this spirit that early modem Europeans were able to read off all their religious orthodoxies in parodic disguise. There were nine orders of devils to match the nine orders of angels. Each devil was said to have his ‘adversary’ in heaven, in the form of a saint with exactly opposite qualities.[18] The mirror imagery of (especially female) sainthood and witchcraft was sufficiently strong in later medieval Europe to suggest to one modem scholar an inverse correspondence between such paired categories as *mmuAc/maleficium,* holy vision/demonic sabbat, and ecstasy/possession.[19] In Counter-Reformation Europe it was still informing the demonology of a writer like Boguet.[20] The demonic pact was obviously parasitic on baptism, and the agreement it enshrined on God’s covenant with the Church (and originally with the Old Testament patriarchs).[21] English Calvinists, with their contractual theology, saw in

[11] Henri de Montaigne [Hcnricus a *Monlamto],Daemonismimica, inmagiaeprogressu (Paris,* 1612), 1-2.

“ Bossy, *Christianity,* 137.

” Richard Bernard, *A guide to grand-jury men, divided into two bookes: In the first, is the authors best advice to them what to doe, before they bring in a billa vera in cases ofwitchcraft ...In the second, is a treatise touching witches good and bad,* 2nd edn. (London, 1630), 260-5 [mispagination].

[11] Sebastien Michaelis, *The admirable historie of the possession and conversion of a penitent woman,* trans. W.B. (London, 1613), 323-8,353-4.

” Gabor Klaniczay, ‘Hungary: The Accusations and the Universe of Popular Magic’, in Ankarloo and Henningscn (eds.), *Early Modem European Witchcraft,* 240-1; id., *'Miraculum* und *maleficium.* Einige Überlegungen zu den weiblichen Hciligcn des Mittelalters in Mittelcuropa’, *Jahrbuch des Wissenschaftskolleg, Berlin* (1990-1), 224-52 (I am most grateful to the author for making this essay available to me); id., *The Uses of Supernatural Power: The Transformation of Popular Religion in Medieval and Early-Modern Europe,* trans. Susan Singerman, ed. Karen Margolis (Cambridge, 1990), 4. See also, on this theme, Peter Dinzelbacher ‘Heilige oder Hexen?’, in Dieter Simon (ed.), *Religiöse Devianz: Untersuchungenzusozialen, rechtlichen und lheologischen Reaktionen auf religiöse Abweichung im westlichen und östlichen Mittelalter* (Frankfurt/Main, 1990), 49-59, and the more cautious remarks of Richard Kieckhefer, ‘The Holy and the Unholy: Sainthood, Witchcraft, and Magic in Late Medieval Europe’,/, *of Medieval and Renaissance* SW. 24 (1994), 355-85.

[20] *Houdard, Sciences du Diable,* 126-38.

[21] The aping of God's original covenant is mentioned by Hermann Samson, *Neun ausserlesen und wolgegriindete Hexen Predigt* (Riga, 1626), sigs. Cii’-Ciii’.

it an ‘inversion of orthodox soteriology’,[22] while their Catholic enemies identified it as the contrary’ of the vow of monasticism.[23] The demonic mark could be construed as an imitation of circumcision under the old law and of the sign of the cross under the new, as well as an inversion of the holy stigmata.[24] The magic arts copied providential powers, with divination and prophecy as direct rivals.[25] Weyer approvingly cited pseudo-Clement of Rome to the effect that such arts had their own ‘ministers, corresponding to but contrary to God’s angels’.[26] According to Niels Hemmingsen, just as the true God upheld the true faith with three instruments—the word, the sacraments, and the spirit—so the devil gave magicians *his* word, *his* sacraments, and *his* spirit (the spirit of lies).[27] Holy miracles and prodigies were an obvious further challenge to the devil’s (and the Antichrist’s) talents as a mimic. It was often argued that demonic possession was modelled on the incarnation, with the devil attempting to debase humanity, as much as Christ had elevated it, by clothing himself in its form.[28] Just as the Catholic Church had its sacraments, explained the Spanish Franciscan Martin de Castañega, so the diabolical church had its ‘execrations *(execramentos)*’. The first were ordained in common items (bread, wine, and so on), were clear and simple in form, and were administered by men; the second were practised ‘with unguents and potions made from rare animals and birds, and with obscure and rhymed words’, thrived on ugliness and pollution, and were administered by women.[29] A similar parallel was made by the French theologian André Valladier in a 1612 Advent sermon. Christ had given power to the word to confer grace during penance, baptism, and the other sacraments, and to change the elements in the mass, as well as giving supernatural efficacy to natural things like water and oil; the devil, for his part, tried to convince his followers that magic utterances, unguents, rings, and other paraphernalia had the same kind of force.[30] Catholics, it seems, were especially sensitive to the counter-symbolism of oils and anointing. The grease that sent witches flying to their meetings, according to Pierre de Lancre, was an attempt to transfer to the sabbat the sense of reverence attached to the church’s own oleaginous sacraments, baptism and holy unction.[31]

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[22] Bostridge, ‘Debates about Witchcraft’, 28. For an example, see Gaule, *Cases of conscience,* 68-9.

[23] Grillando, *Tractatus de sortilegiis,* in *Malleus maleficarum,* i (vol. 2, pt. 2), 228; Petrus Ostermann, *Commentarius iuridicus. Ad L. stigmata. C. defabricensibus... in quo de variis speciebus signaturarum, characterum, et stigmatum... imprimis vero Antichristi, et de illorum, quae sagis iniusta deprehenduntur, hinc derivata origine, significatione et demonstratione, cum refutatione argumentorum contrariorum breviter tractatus* (Cologne, 1629), 22-3. A. D. Wright, *The Counter-Reformation; Catholic Europe and the Non-Christian World* (London, 1982), 41, suggests that the female coven was the inverse of the male confraternity.

[24] Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum,* 15-16; Heywood, *Hierarchie,* 472.

[25] See, for example, Niels Hemmingsen, *Admonitio de superstitionibus magicis vitandis, in gratiam sincerae religionis amantium* (Copenhagen, 1575), sig. G4'.

[26] Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum,* 377.

[27] Hemmingsen, *Admonitio,* sigs. B2'-B5'.

[28] See, for example, Léon d’Alexis [pseud, of Pierre de Bérulle], *Traicte des energumenes, suivy d’un discours sur la possession de Marthe Drossier* (Troyes, 1599), fos. 37’-8>. Ady complained that for some the distinction had become ‘very nice, or rather none at all’: [Thomas Ady], *The doctrine of devils proved to be the grand apostacy of these later times* (London, 1676), 28.

[29] Martin de Castañega, *Tratado muy sotily bien fundado de las supersticiones y hechicerias y vanos conjuros y abusiones; y otra cosas al caso tocantes y de la posibilidad e remedio deltas* (Logroño 1529) repr La Sociedad de Bibliófilos Españoles, Segunda Epoca, 17 (Madrid, 1946). I have used the trans by David H Darst, ‘Witchcraft in Spain: The Testimony of Martin de Castañega’s Treatise on Superstition and Witchcraft (1529)’, *Procs. American Philosophical Society,* 123 (1979), 301-22, see esp. 302-4 (quotation at 303).

The sabbat itself was, of course, at the very heart of the witches’ cult, notably for those with a sacramental understanding of its counterpart in the normal world. Here the correspondences were particularly exact and the ironies, in consequence, especially telling; Satan’s rituals were performed, it was remarked, ‘in the same way, with the same ceremonies, customs and vestments *(habits)* as is done by priests for the holy sacrifice.’[32] In de Lancre’s circumstantial version, the devil picked the days and dates for religious reasons, coinciding, for example, with the four great annual festivals; he dragged his congregation from parish to parish in mockery of ordinary processions; he sited the sabbat opposite the parish church with himself directly facing the high altar with its Holy Sacrament; and, in Labourd at least, he even got priest-magicians to officiate for him, who, since they were saying masses in both the true and the false church at once, could be relied on to make the two versions as alike as possible.[33] The result was perfect travesty; the devil enthroned like God (although de Lancre felt that the devil crucified like Christ would have been more appropriate), together with altars, demon ‘saints’, music, hand-bells, crucifixes (with the arms lopped off), prelates, bishops and priests (including a deacon and a subdeacon), candles, aspersions (with the devil’s urine), censings, and, of course, the liturgy (sign of the cross at the entry, offering, sermon, elevation, *ite inissa est).* De Lancre explained that at the sign of the cross the celebrants mocked the trinity with a blasphemous *in nomine* in three languages, and (as we saw earlier) during the elevation turned themselves upside-down. After elevating the black host (in some other versions, a round piece of blackened turnip) the priest threw it down and ground it into pieces. One of the most important witches had confided to de Lancre that she believed witchcraft to be a better religion than the one it simulated because its masses were more splendid.[34]

[K] Andri- Valladier, *La Saincte Philosophic de Fame* (Paris, 1614), 641-2; cf. Francois Farconnet, *Relation veritable contenant ce qui s’est passe aux exorcismes d’une fille appellee Elisabeth Allier* (Paris, 1649), 13-14.

” De Lancre, *Tableau de I’inconstance des mauvais anges et demons,* 111-23.

[12] Valderrama, *Histoiregenerale,* bk. 3, 244; Grillando, *Tractatusde sortilegiis,* in *Malleus maleficarum,* i (vol. 2, pt. 2). 228^{b}.

” De Lancre, *Tableau de I'inconstance des mavais anges et demons,* 65-9,420.

[M] Ibid. 453-62, 126. For host desecration, see also *La Possession de Jeanne Fery, religieuse professe du couvent des sieurs noiresde la ville de Mons,* ed. D. M. Bourneville (Paris, 1886), 89-90 (repr. of [Francois Buisscret *et al.], Histoire admirable et veritable des choses advenues a I ’endroict d une religieuse professe du couvent des sirurs noires, de la ville de Mons en Hainaut,* Paris, 1586). Other full accounts of the sabbat and its reversals by Catholic authors are Grillando, *Tractatus de sortilegiis,* in *Malleus maleficarum* (1669 edn.), ii (vol. 2, pt. 2), 271-3; Henri Boguet,z/n *Examen of Witches,* trans. E. A. Ashwin, ed. Montague Summers (London, 1929), 51-61, first full version pub. as *Discours des sorciers* (1602); Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum,* 13-16,35—40, 47-8 (after Florimond de Raemond); Esprit de Bosroger, *La Piete ajfiigee; ou, Discours historique et theologique de la possession des religieuses dittes de Saincte Elizabeth de Louviers* (Rouen, 1652), 389-403; Jacques d’Autun, *L’Incredulite spavante, el la credulite ignorante: au sujet des magiciens el*

Protestant sabbats were naturally less elaborate but the same principles applied. King James, with characteristic Protestant emphasis on a teaching clergy, said that just as the minister, sent by God, taught Christians how to serve him in truth, ‘so that uncleane spirite, in his owne person teacheth his Disciples, at the time of their conveening, how to worke all kinde of mischiefe’. Wishing to ‘counterfeit’ God in exact ways, the devil made witches meet ‘in these verrie places, which are destinat and ordeined for the conveening of the servantes of God.’[35] Similarly, for the Lutheran preacher Hinrich Rimphoff, sabbats took place for the purpose of confirming demonic allegiances, in imitation of the way the godly renewed their covenant with God each time they took communion.[36] Of the BlAkulla meetings in Sweden it has been said that their features were mirror images of the surrounding reality ‘dichotomously transformed’. Here, the Lord’s Prayer began with ‘Our Father which art in Hell’.[37] Later still, the New England witches were said to form themselves into assemblies ‘much after the manner of the Congregational Churches’.[38]

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Nothing has been more familiar than this concept of witchcraft as an anti-religion. But there was a further aspect to demonic irony that was no less significant for early modern cultural values. Here, the appearances were those of institutional and social order, and the reality was a disorder wrought by disobedience and tyranny. Again, this can be called ‘political’, provided the widest connotations of the term are preserved. For demonic inversion was inseparable, in the first instance, from notions of archetypal rebellion and pseudo-monarchy. The devil’s original presumption prefigured every subsequent act of resistance; he was Belial, ‘which means’, wrote the authors of *Malleus malejicarum,* ‘Without Yoke or Master’.[39] It was his policy, said another authority on witchcraft, ‘ever to cavill and dispute against obedience, yea to cause grudgings and mutinies against supcriours and governours.’[w]The style of his rule in hell was, as Erasmus explained, a model for all those whose political and moral intentions were most unlike God’s.[41] Naturally, some sort of system could be discerned there, and there was no difficulty in defending both the existence of distinctions among devils and their need to maintain them. Hell itself, said James I, could

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des sorciers (Lyons, 1671), 180-6 and see also 127-80. For perhaps the fullest depictions of all, including the dipping of the Antichrist’s genitals into the consecrated wine before its consumption sec the extraordinary accounts of the rituals of the sabbat in Jean Le Normant, HiWre *veritable et memorable dece quie’est passe sous I'exorcisme de trots files possedees is pais de Flandre, pl.* 1 (Paris 1623) 32-71 92-100 121-3 303-4; full title and further details in Ch. 28 below.

[33] James VI and I, *Daemonologie* (Edinburgh, 1597), 36.

" Hinrich Rimphoff, *Drachen-Konig; das ist; WarhaJJlige, deutliche. christliche, und hochnotwendige beschreybunge, dess grawsamen, hochvennaledeyten /lexers, und Zauber Teuffels* (Rinteln 1647) 73-1

” Bengt Ankarloo, *Trolldomsproeesserrsa i Sverige* (Lund, 1971), 334-5 (English summary)

” William T umer, *A compleat history of the most remarkable providences both of Judgment and merer which have hapned in this present age* (London, 1697),pt. 1,149 (third pagination). *

[39] [Kramer and Sprenger], *Malleus malefic arum,* 89.

[40] Michaelis, *Admirable historie,* 109 (spoken by a devil undergoing exorcism).

[41] *Erasmus, Education ofa Christian Prince,* **174.**

not subsist without order.[42] Writing in *Leviathan's* wake, Henry Hally well declared that even devils could see that unrestrained gratification of pleasure and avoidance of pain would only breed Hobbesian nastiness; they too came together in a form of social contract.[43]

'Reigning in hell' was still pure oxymoron, however (as well as the antithesis of 'serving in heaven'). It involved the opposite of perfect princely and paterfamilial government. Aquinas had established that demons only co-operated out of common hatred for mankind, not from mutual love or respect for magistracy. Though there were ranks among the fallen angels, the criteria involved were those of greatness in malice and, consequently, anguish, rather than worth and felicity. In effect, then, the devil's regimen was a compendium of the paradoxes of misrule; a hierarchy governed from the lowest point of excellence, a society in which dishonour was a badge of status, and a *speculum* imitable only by the politically vicious. This was worse than simple anarchy. Henri Boguet called it 'cacarchy' and said, aptly, that it was 'a sort of disordered order'.[44]

There was, moreover, a specific sense in which demonic allegiance was necessarily associated with disobedience and its consequences. The voluntary contract with the devil may have been seen, first and foremost, as spiritual apostasy but the non-sacramental significance of baptism and the insistence on both the physical corporeality of devils and their political organization inevitably brought it as close to an act of literal, if indirect, resistance. Pierre Node took it for granted that it was 'an express attempt' against earthly kings and their subjects as well as a threat to the king of kings himself.[45] Puritan witchcraft authors in England likewise used the language of politics to convey the essential rcbelliousnesss of witches. Their mentor, William Perkins, recommended that the natural law enjoining the death penalty for all enemies of the state be extended to 'the most notorious traytour and rebell that can be ... For [the witch] renounceth God himsclfe, the King of kings, shee leaves the socictie of his Church and people, shee bindeth her selfe in league with the Devill'.[46] The biblical text occasioning this statement (1 Samuel 15: 23: 'For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft') could be used to demonstrate the identity in substance as well as in seriousness of the two sins.[47] Hence the sensitivity of French and English writers to the double meanings in the word 'conjuration'; hence, too, the overtones in the claim made in the English homily books that rebels 'most horribly prophanc, and pollute the Sabbath day, serving Sathan, and by doing of his work, making it the devils day, instead of the Lords day'.[48] While witchcraft was constituted by an act of revolt, rebels effectively promulgated the sabbat.

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[42] James VI and I, *Regales aphorisms: or, a royal chain of golden sentences ... as at severall times ... they were delivered by King James* (London, 1650), no. 1; cf. Hieronymus Zanchy, *De operibus Dei intra spacium sex dierum creatis,* in id., *Operum theologicorum* (8 vols. in 3; Geneva, 1605), i (vol. 3), cols. 205-7.

[42] Hallywell, *Melampronoea,* 15-25.

[44] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae,* xiv. 159-63; Boguet, *Examen of Witches,* 14-15; cf. Scipion Dupleix, *La Troisieme Partie de la metaphysique ou science surnaturelle qui est des anges et daemons,* in id., *Corps de philosophic* (6 pts. in 3 vols.; Paris, 1626), ii. 245-8 (bk. 8, ch. 12), entitled 'Des ordres dcsordonnees et accord discordant des daemons'. For other typical discussions, see Pierre Binsfeld, *Tractatus de confessionibus maleficorum et sagarum. An et quanta fides iis adhibenda sit?,* 4th cdn. (Cologne, 1623), 44-7; Valderrama, *Histoire generale,* bk. 3, 2-11; Antonius Rusca, *De inferno, et statu daemonum ante mundi exilium* (iVlilan, 1621), 476-7,494-7,499-518; Rene Dupont, *La Philosophic des esprits, divisee en cinq livres ...le cinquieme, de Vestre des demons, et de leur malice,* cd. Mathieu Le I leurt, 3rd cdn. (Rouen, 1628), fos. 197a-8b; Vincent Pons, *Depotentia etscientia daemonum quaestio theologica* (Aix-en-Provence, 1612), 37,52-61; Georg Stengel, *Paraenesis de ruina Luciferi, ceterorumque angelorum* (Ingolstadt, 1630), 179-95. For inversion and antithesis in early modem hell, see Piero Camporcsi, *The Fear of Hell: Images of Damnation and Salvation in Early Modem Europe,* trans. Lucinda Byatt (Cambridge, 1991), pp. vii, 10-11,14,56,82-3,88-9.

[42] Pierre Node, *Declamation cont re Perreur execrable des maleficiers, sorciers, enchant eurs, magiciens, devins, et semblables observateurs des superstitions* (1578), pub. in Masse, *De I'imposture et tromperie des diables,* separate pagination, 51 (= 52).

Witches were sometimes said to want the actual overthrow of godly princes but there was nothing comparable in the political sphere to the conspiracy theories of the churchmen.[49] Instead, there were acts of *nialeficium* that brought disorder to the commonwealth or threatened it symbolically. Thus it was widely accepted that witches could destroy marital hierarchy by sowing dissension in families, by incitements to promiscuity, and, above all, by using ligature to prevent sexual consummation. The Huguenot authority on ligature, L'Hierosmc Haultin, proposed familial order—especially among the Protestants of La Rochelle, it seems—as one of the devil's main targets, and the general idea was repeated routinely by French Catholic authorities on marriage during the seventeenth century.[50] The threat had inversionary' implications, signalled by one magical practitioner (and priest) who allegedly 'tied the knot' not with the words of the wedding ritual, 'Quod Deus coniunxit homo non separct', but with 'Quod Diabolus coniunxit Deus non separet' instead.[51] De Lancre and Michaëlis in France and Rheynmann and Marcus Scultetus in Germany also claimed that witchcraft subverted familial authority by destroying filial love in its devotees and victims.[52] Another German pamphleteer associated the phenom-

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[46] William Perkins,// *discourse ofthe damned art ofwitchcraft* (Cambridge, 1610), 248 (first pub. 1608); cf. Henry Holland, *A treatise against witchcraft* (Cambridge, 1590), sig. Aii^r; Francis Coxe, *A short treatise declaringe the detestable wickednesse of magicall sciences, as necromancie, conjurations of spirites, curiouse astro logic and such lyke* (London, [1561]), sig. B5^{r}" (recommending stoning in the same circumstances).

[47] See also below, Ch. 40.

[41] Anon., *The seconde tome of homelyes* (London, 1563), 292-3.

[49] For some examples, see Lambert Daneau, *A dialogue of witches,* trans, attributed to Thomas Twyne (London, 1575), sig. Bii^r ' (pub. first as *De veneficis, quos olim sortilegos, nunc autem vulgo sortiarios vocant, dialogus,* in 1574); *Newesfrom Scotland,* repr. in *Gentleman's Magazine,* 49 (1779), 393-5,449-52 (witches of North Berwick, 1590-1); Crespct, *Deux Livres,* fo. 41'; cf. below, Ch. 36.

[w] L'Hierosme I laultin, *Traite de Tenchantement qu 'on appelle vulgairement le nouement de Tesguillette* (La Rochelle, 1591), *passim-,* Briggs, *Communities of Belief,* 243-4. For the Calvinist version see Daneau, *Dialogue,* sig. Evin*.

" Anon., *Diteourt tommaire det toriileget, veneficet et idolatreriet. tiré det procez crimineltiugez an tiege royal de Montmor. Ion en Potctoulapretenle annee 1599* (n.p., n.d.), 41-9 (case of Barnabe Dalestz). The tract is signed F .A. and dated 13 November 1599; Yves-Plessis ascribes it to Jacobus Rickius

" DeUncre,TflWM«</e/7nrO«rflnfeJMmauvfl«ang«««*wow3;MichagliS)ZWm'·rflWfA';·j/on· 254; Adnanus Rheynmannus, *Etn ehntthch und nothwendig Getprach, von den bitten abtriinnigen Engeln, oder untaubem Geutern, dte man Teuffel nennet,* tn *Theatrum de veneficit* (Frankfurt/Main 1586) 112- Marcus Scultetus, *Praetidtum angehcum. Ein niitzlich Handbiichlein. Vonguten undboten Engeln- und von dererbevder Weten, Uhrtprung, Eigentchajjten, Ampt, Dienttbeitallung unnd Werkken gegen Gott und der christlichen*

enon of child witches with the breakdown of parental discipline.[53] Witches disturbed wedlock by raising ‘jars, Jealousies, strifes, and heart-burning disagreements, Like a thick scurf o’er life’, according to Hecate in Thomas Middleton’s *The Witch.* Boguet said they did it by wasting semen at the sabbat.[54] Their activities could also invert motherhood and maternal relations, as in the suckling of familiars and the growing of demonic ‘teats’—both common in English cases.[55] The results of all this demonic hostility towards the family were nowhere better symbolized than in a comedy of 1634, Brome and Heywood’s *The late Lancashire witches.* A well-ordered household is attacked (in a ‘retrograde and preposterous way’) by sorcery—the father kneels to the son, the wife obeys the daughter, and the children are overawed by the servants. The point is hardly obscure but it is nevertheless underlined; a nephew comments that it is as if the house itself had been turned on its roof, while a neighbour protests that he might as well ‘stand upon my head, and kick my heels at the skies’. Ligature and the symbolism of a charivari reinforce the same theme.[56]

The idea that witches could change themselves and others into animals is another instance of an inversion with moral and political overtones; ‘inconstancy of form’, we are told, is ‘one of a number of modes in which certain [mythical] narratives represent the evasion of constraints.’[57] Although it was usual to argue that the transformations were illusory, the concept of metamorphosis itself suggested that instinct might replace reason, and brutishness, virtue. The example of the natural disorders supposedly wrought by *nialeficium* was more explicit still. Witches, aided by demonic efficacy, interfered with the elements and the climate to achieve especially hurtful or unseasonable reversals. The devil’s powers were ultimately within nature (as we shall see) but Remy, like the poets and dramatists, could still depict them in the extravagant language of the *mtindus inversus'.*

> there is nothing to hinder a Demon from raising up mountains to an enormous height in a moment, and then casting them down into the deepest abysses; from stopping the flow of rivers, or even causing them to go backwards; from drying up the very sea (if we may believe Apuleius); from bringing down the skies, holding the earth in suspension, making fountains solid, raising the shades of the dead, putting out the stars, lighting up the very darkness of Hell, and turning upside down the whole scheme of this universe?[8]

Kirchen in alien Stdnden (Wittenberg, 1616), 503-79. See also for a summary of Lutheran views, Jodocus *Ylo<i\Lt:r,Derteufelselbsdasist Warhafftiger... bericht von den Teufeln, Wassiesein, Woher sie gekommen, Und wassie teglich wircken,* in *Theatrum diabolorum* (Frankfurt/Main, 1569), fos. xxxii*-xxxiii'.

[n] *Newer Tractat von der verführten Kinder Zauberey,* trans. Wolfgang Schilling (Cologne, 1629), orig. in Latin.

[54] Thomas Middleton, *The Witch,* in *The I Forks of Thomas Middleton,* ed. A. H. Bullen (8 vols.; London, 1885-6), v. 375 (l. ii. 11.172-4); Boguet, *Examen of Witches,* 30.

[55] This point is elaborated by Karen Newman, *Fashioning Feminity and English Renaissance Drama* (London, 1991), 51-70.

[56] *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Heywood,* ed. R. H. Shepherd (6 vols.; London, 1874), iv. 178 (Act I, Sc. i). I. Donaldson, *The World Upside-Down: Comedy from Jonson to Fielding* (Oxford, 1970), 80, considers the play in a tradition of comic treatments of disorder as inversion that drew on forms of ritual misrule and included festive drama such as the Jonsonian masque.

[57] Needham, *Primordial Characters,* 59.

[51] Remy, *Demonolatry,* 141; cf. *Recit veritable de Feffet d'un malheureux sort magique nouvellement arrivi*

Once descriptions of the diabolical polity and the alleged doings of witches are seen in this light, it becomes possible to think of sabbat rituals in other than liturgical terms—or, rather, in terms of other liturgies. Religiosity was not, of course, confined to formal worship in the age of the witch trials, but the sabbat's elaborate ceremonies of rulership and homage were more suggestive of a Renaissance court festival than a church service. Accounts of the induction of witches were usually couched in the language of formal patronage and clientage, and they evoked a mood suitable to what Thomas Heywood called 'the pompe and regalitie' of the devil's state.[59] Valderrama set his version in a splendid palace, adorned with all the usual baroque finery, where the devil, feigning majesty and surrounded by his 'barons' and 'councillors', was presented with a new recruit, ready to swear an 'execrable' oath of vassalage and allegiance. A spurious reciprocity secured the promise of dishonourable service on the one hand, and of fake honours and riches on the other.[60] In this context, the demonic pact, with its accompanying mark, became a parody of feudal service and friendship.[61] The most sustained description is again de Lancre's, where it is illustrated by an engraving by Jan Ziarnko. In form at least, the occasion is unmistakably that of a court spectacle, organized by a 'master of ceremonies and governor of the sabbat' before the thrones of Satan and a designated 'queen'. A new client is presented, courtiers engage in a feast and various *ballets,* and there is instrumental music. An audience of aristocratic figures includes a group of women 'with masks for remaining always covered and disguised'. There is the same emblematic quality here as in the other court festivals of the period, the same attention to detail in the performance, the same use of symbol and imagery, and the purpose is equally didactic. 'For an instance', writes an expert on Renaissance festivals, 'one catches a glimpse of the magnificences at the late Valois Court.'[62]

This impression of a festive hell is confirmed, not weakened, by the absolute antithesis of content. In place of godlike monarchy and perfect Platonic love, the sabbat celebrated the most extreme tyranny and the foulest sexual debasement, and its aim was not to bring moral order and civil peace through the acting out of ideal roles but to ensure chaos by dehumanization and atrocities. If Ziarnko's famous engraving shows a court, it is, then, an anti-court, and de Lancre's impresario is not, as it were, a master of revels but a demonic lord of misrule. The symbolic inversions are not merely those of the world upside-down but specifically those of so many anti-masque

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tur cinq habitant et deux damoiselles de la ville de Chasteaudun et des ejfroyables actions qu 'Us font journellemenl au grand estonnement du peuple (Paris, 1637), 4.

” Heywood, *Hierarchies* 472.

“ Valderrama, *Histoire generate,* bk. 3,221-4; cf. Adam von Lebenwaldt, *Acht Tractdtelvon dess Teuffels List und Betrug* (2 vols.; Salzburg, 1680-2), ii. tract. 8 (sep. paginated), 83-7

“ Ostermann, *De stigmatibus,* 23, 64-70; Etienne Delcambre, *Le Concept de la sorcellerie dans le duché de Lorraine auXt'I'etauXt'irsiecle (3 vols.;Nmcy,W8-5l), i. 47.* *torcettene aans*

“ Margaret M. McGowan, 'Pierre de Lancre's *Tableau de I'inconstance des mauvais antes et demons'* The Sabbat Sensationalised', in S. Anglo (ed.), *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature^ Witchcraft* (London, 1977), 192-3; de Lancre, *Tableau de I'inconstance des mauvais angeset demons* 124—53 tZiarnko's engraving is found only in the 1613 edn., opposite p.l 18). See also on this theme Tuli'o Grn **Baroja,** *The World of the Witches,* trans. O. N. V. Glendinning (London, 1964), 160-5.

uiises en scene, albeit in more horrendous forms—the elevation of the passions over reason by ritual depravities, physical reversals involving left-handedness, backwardness, and complete bodily inversions, vertiginous dancing, discordant music, and nauseating food. The mood is precisely that which Valois, Bourbon, and Stuart court entertainments were intended to transcend, that of physical obscurity and illusion, moral dissimulation, the metamorphosis of shapes, the enchantment of understandings, and saturnalian licence. The grotesque world of the sabbat was the logical and symbolic antithesis of the orderly world of *ballet de cour* and masque. Heywood saw the point exactly; 'the Divell' he wrote, 'doth th'Almighty zany. For in those great works which all wonder aske, he is still present with his Anti-maske.'[61 * 63]

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Given the enormity of their sins and a world where all things were subject to inversion, there was, in fact, no limit to the disorder that witches (with the devil's aid and God's permission) were capable of. It was often said that, without God's restraining hand, the devil would indeed ruin the whole world by inverting everything in it. Henry Holland, for instance, thought that the notion 'that witches have power to turne the world upside down at their pleasure', was mistaken only in the sense that this would have to be a providential work.[64] Nevertheless, audiences and readers were clearly expected to make sense of witchcraft in conventional ways, anchoring its meaning in terms of styles of thinking about the world upside-down. Each detailed manifestation of demonism presupposed the orderliness and legitimacy of its direct opposite in normal life—normality and its inversion being, as I have insisted all along, bound together by looking-glass logic. It also took meaning from the many relations of causal interdependence and symbolic correlation that interlaced the Christian and Neoplatonist universe. Like the oppositions used in the myths and rituals of peoples who classify dualistically, individual inversions were epigrams 'whose point' (to repeat Beidelman), 'depended upon an associative chain-reaction of symbols triggered off by the one or two terms actually presented.'[65]

Thus, the rebellious witch took her place among those who believed that 'no household, no city, no nation whatever, nor the whole race of men, nor the whole nature of things, nor the whole world, can endure and remain long in being, without obedience and command.'[66] Demonic tyranny was an affront to all well-governed commonwealths but also to every state of moral equipoise. The wider implications of attacks on the family, and of the fact that they were promoted largely by women, could hardly have been missed in a culture that accepted the patriarchal household as both the actual source and analogical representation of good government. The reversing of the human bodily hierarchies or of priorities in natural things had effects that could be felt throughout a world thought to be an organic unity of sentients. Especially resonant were references to the dance, for dancing not only had its own

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[61] Heywood, *Hierarchic,* 415.

[w] Holland, *Treatise against witchcraft,* sig. Giii^{r}. Cf. Node, *Declamation,* 'Advcrtisscment au lccteur'; Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum,* 67.

[65] See above, Ch. 3, pp. 37-8. [tA] Des *hutels, Harengue au people francois,fo.V7.*

therapeutic powers to confer order and virtue but figured the harmonic relations to which every phenomenon was subject. Witches were made frantic and homicidal by theirs and miscarried if they were pregnant; they specialized, it was said, in gestures of violence and lewdness.[67] A single ritual act such as the anal kiss perverted religious worship and secular fealty, dethroned reason from a sovereign position on which individual well-being and social relations (including political obligation) were thought to depend, and symbolized in the most obvious manner the defiant character of demonic politics as well as its preposterousness.[68]

In these and other ways, demonology superimposed image upon image of disorder.[69] This profusion of meanings made witchcraft ideal material for the literary imagination, but that it should have been integrated in performances as carefully structured as the court masque shows how naturally it cohered with the general conception of things among the learned. Ben Jonson's first major excursion into the anti-masque form was in his *Masque of queenes* (1609). In the main part of the entertainment, twelve ancient queens, among whom Bel-Anna was the quintessence of virtue, were presented to Heroic Virtue, a monarch god, by Good Fame his daughter. They rode in a triumphal procession to pay their homage to him and decided to grace his court with their individual merits. The political allusions were not esoteric; only a truly exemplary prince such as King James could be rewarded with a reputation efficacious enough in itself to make his subjects want to imitate him in every respect. But to establish his point most effectively, that is (in the genre of the masque) *a contrariis,* Jonson needed not only a spectacle of false religious worship,[70] but an antithetical conception of court life and values expressed in ritual form. He found it in the demonologies of Remy, Godelmann, Del Rio, Elich, Bodin, Grillando, and King James himself. The result was an anti-masque set in 'an ougly Hell' and depicting in the persons of twelve hags and their minutely detailed witchcraft the 'faythfull Opposites' of the 'renowned Queenes' and their equally ritualistic but exactly contrary magic. This 'enhanced the virtuous or thaumaturgical powers attributed to majesty by showing them in active and absolute opposition to negative and disruptive agencies'.[71] The witches' homage was to the tyrant devil-goat and their aim was to profane the night's proceedings and subvert the royal virtues; as their leader proclaims:

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[67] Jean Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers* (Paris, 1580), 87-9; Valderrama, *Histoire generale* bk.3, 234; Dame Brovin, *Les Vengeances divines* (Paris, 1595), fos. 213r-14v; Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum,* 39,4a; de Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et demons,* 199-212. On dance as harmony see John C. Meagher, 'The Dance and the Masques of Ben Jonson', *J. Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* 25 (1962), 258-77. For the demonic associations of dancing for Calvinists, see H. P. Clive, 'The Calvinists and the Question of Dancing in the Sixteenth Century', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance,* 23 (1961), 296-323. Much the same kind of analysis might be made of the symbolism of music in its normal and demonic forms.

[68] Castañega, *Tratado,* 306-7; Elich, *Daemonomagia,* 133-4 (132-9 for sabbat rituals); cf. Nicolas J. Perella, *The Kiss Sacred and Profane* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969).

[69] For a study of this imagery in the context of juridical representations of witchcraft see Nicole Jacques-Chaquin, 'La Sorcière et le pouvoir: Essai sur les composantes [illegible] figure de la sorcière', in ead. (ed.), *La Sorcellerie,* Cahiers de Fontenay, 11-12 (Fontenay-aux-Roses, 1978), 8-37, esp. 11-24.

[70] W. Todd Furniss, 'The Annotation of Jonson's *Masque of Queens*', *Rev. English Stud.* NS 5 (1954), 34

> I hate to see these fruicts of a soft peace,
> And curse the piety gives it such increase.
> Let us disturbe it, then; and blast the light;
> Mixe Hell, with Heaven; and make Nature fight
> Within her selfe; loose the whole henge of Things;
> And cause the Endes runne back into theyr Springs.

Jonson explained that these powers of inverting Nature were frequently 'ascrib'd to Witches, and challeng'd by themselves', and that he had found them described in Rémy, as well as in Ovid, Apuleius, and other authorities.[72]

The antithesis at which he aimed was symbolized most expressly in the dance, perhaps the focus of all masque meanings. Accompanied by 'a strange and sodayne Musique', the witches fell into their 'magicall Daunce', with its contrary and backward motions, and antic gestures. The measures of the noble queens, on the other hand, 'were so even, and apt, and theyr expression so just; as if Mathematicians had lost proportion, they might there have found it'.[73] So fundamental was this notion of proportion in Neoplatonic conceptions of order that we can readily see how Jonson and his court audience could conceive of these two sets of dancers as emblems of contrary modes of ethical and political life. The/War^we *ofqueeties* is about the victory of one of these modes. At the height of the sabbat, the witches are silenced, their powers nullified, and the world put the right way up again—all by the restorative magic of monarchy.

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[71] Parry, *Golden Age Restor'd.* 49.

[72] Ben Jonson, *Masque of queenes.* in *Ben Jonson* [Works], vii. 278-319,11.6-7,24—5,132,462,431—4, 144-9 (and annotation); commentary in Orgcl, *Jonsonian Masque.* 130-46.

[71] Jonson, *Masque of queenes.* 11. 344-50,753-6; Meagher, 'The Dance and the Masques of Ben Jonson*, 258-77; John P. Cutts, 'Le Rôle de la musique dans les masques de Ben Jonson et notamment dans *Oberon* (1610-1611)', in Jacquot (ed.), *Fêtes de la Renaissance,* i. 285-6.

7

Witchcraft and Wit-Craft

> By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.
>
> (2 Corinthians 6:8-10)

> The Devill will have a word for evill, for every word that God shall have for good.
>
> (George Downame, *Apostolical! injunction for unity and peace)*

> Spell *Eva* backe and *Ave* shall you finde,
> The first began, the last reverst our harmes,
> An Angels witching wordes did *Eva* blinde,
> An Angels *Ave* disinchants the charmes,
> Death first by womans weaknes entred in,
> In womans vertue life doth now begin.
>
> (Robert Southwell, 'The Virgins Salutation')

It would be odd to connect language matters with witchcraft matters without considering the way demonology was actually composed. So far, I have been concerned with structures of representation and interpretation—with how things meant what they meant on a broad scale. These cognitive and semantic issues are, of course, always linguistic in a formal, second-order sense. But because of the particular ways in which things were imagined in early modern Europe, they tended in this period to be linguistic in a substantive, first-order sense as well. The world does not have to be composed of contraries like a piece of writing; subsequently, it was thought to consist of molecules in motion. Religious life does not have to be a war of opposites; it eventually tolerated latitude and pluralism. Yet it was, in each case, the first that was proposed while witches were being written about, and this meant that the detailed logical and rhetorical processes of language were central to *what* was represented as well as to ways of representing it. That reality and discourse collapse into each other has been a guiding assumption of post-modernism, but it may account for some premodern modes of understanding as well.

Here again, it is Alphonsus de Spina, the fifteenth-century Augustinian, who provides the archetype. Asking why there were demons in the world at all, he replied that this was for the 'exercise of the good and the beauty *(decor) of* the universe'. The latter consisted in *dijfonnitas* for example, between the various heavenly bodies, the four elements, the different creatures, the appearances of human beings, the seasons, and light and darkness. The reason for any evil at all in the creation was, as Augustine had explained, to grace it with antitheses 'like a beautiful poem'. These were 'certain ornaments of speech made by contraries', so that 'just as beauty is seen in such [poetic] conceits, so too in the universe the beauty of the good shines out the more from the punishment of evil, and the goodness of the angels from the malice of the devils.'[1] Marking the other end of the witch-prosecuting period, Richard Baxter adopted a similar view: 'What harmony would there be without variety?', he wrote in his collection of spirit testimonies and witchcraft stories; 'were there nothing but Unity, there would be nothing but God.'[2]

What, then, of the language in which demonology was couched? To topics and tropes, contemporaries added figures for shaping and ornamenting the speech of the orator. *Content*™, or antithesis, was one of these, not now as a figure of thought but as a verbal and/or syntactical patterning of sentences.[3] *Content*™, by its very nature, matched the clashing oppositions of early modem cosmology and religion; it was composition by opposite terms. According to Thomas Wilson's influential *Arte of rhetorique* (and, indeed, all other theorists of rhetoric) it could take the form of opposition either between individual words in sentences or between the sentences themselves; it occurred when 'our talke standeth by contraric wordes, or sentences together.'[4] Henry Peacham's illustrations of the first were: 'I have loved peace, and not loathed it', and 'I have saved his lyfe, and not destroyed it'. For 'contrariety of sentences' he offered this model:

> among the wicked, simplicity is counted foolishnessc, and craftinesse highe wisdom: flattery, is friendship: and faythfulncssc, made fraud: sinne is succoured, and righteousnesse rent in sunder: pore men are despised, rich men highly praised: innocents are commonly condemned, theeves and murderers are quit, and delivered: finally all wickednesse dayly practised, all godlynesse quyte forgotten.[5]

This example shows that, in practice, the two forms of *content*™ were very often found in combination. The semantic contrast between opposed words was obviously more conspicuous to listeners or readers if they were to be found in equivalent positions in two identically shaped phrases or sentences. At the same time, the overall impact of phrases or sentences with the same sequential structure but contrasted meanings was heightened if they included individual verbal oppositions. In modern linguistics this sort of syntactical symmetry would be seen as an example of the mutual reinforcement between the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic choices available to speakers or writers. It is also noticeable that in the examples provided by the rhetoric textbooks the desired effect was heightened still further by the repetition of chains of brief clauses of the same form and rhythm consisting largely of antonyms. This gave scope for what one classical authority called the 'rapid opposition of words', as well as conforming to early modern taste.[6] According to the seventeenth-century author of *The mysterie of rhetorique unveil'd,* the most elegant antithesis was 'when contrary words are oftncst opposed to each other: ... Or when contrary sentences are oftncst opposed'.[7]

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[1] Spina, *Fortalitiumfidci,* sig. Lvi'; Spina illustrated antithesis with the same biblical verses as Augustine had used—2 Corinthians 6:7-10.

[2] Richard Baxter, *The certainty of the world ofthe spirits. Fully evinced by the unquestionable histories of apparitions, operations, witchcrafts, voices, etc. Proving the immortality ofsouls, the malice and misery of the devils, and the damned, and the blessedness of the justified. Written for the conviction ofSadduces and infidels* (London, 1691), Preface, sig. A2*.

[3] For this difference, see *Rhetorica ad Herennium [Ad C. Herennium de ratione dicendi],* trans. H. Caplan (London, 1954), 282-3,376-7.

[4] Thomas Wilson, *The arte of rhetorique* (London, 1553), fo. 106'; cf. J.S., *Mystene of rhetorique,* 163-4.

[5] Peacham, *Garden of eloquence,* sig. Ri“*.

Contentio may not have been a particularly complex or subtle ornament of speech but it ought to have been ideal for the organisation of sentences with a demonological content. It was the equivalent in speech and writing of the kind of logical contrariety that separated evil from good, and its dependence on the binary principle tied it closely to the mentality of dual symbolic classification. It was especially prevalent in the literature dealing with the Antichrist, which overlapped significantly with demonolog}'.[8] To judgements that were nothing if not normative and moralistic it could bring the force of black-and-white semantics. It is difficult, in particular, to see how systematic inversion—in D'Acuto's *II tnondo al roverscio e sosopra,* for example—could have been expressed without it. For, above all, the essence of *contentio* was the use of speech patterns to force attention onto diametrically opposed meanings. Turning again to linguistics, we might borrow (and modify) a remark of Roman Jakobson's concerning grammatical parallelism in poetry: 'Phonemic features and sequences, both morphological and lexical, syntactic and phraseological units, when occurring in metrically or strophically corresponding positions, are necessarily subject to the conscious or subconscious questions whether, how far, and in what respect the positionally corresponding entities are mutually similar.' Modification is required here simply because, in the case of demonology, these questions would be concerned instead with dissimilarity.'

Moreover, *contentio* was recommended in ways that made it seem especially apposite for demonological subjects. A notion fundamental to ancient and modern literary theory is that the essence of all rhetorical figuration lies in linguistic deviance, in forms of speech 'artfully varied from common usage'.[10] In demonology, however, *contentio* could take on special affinities with its deviant subject-matter. Pierre Fabri, for example, said that it was 'of great use in matters of reproof and friendly remonstration, and in explanations *(explications)* of hatreds.'[11] John Hoskins recommended

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' *Rhelorica ad Herennium, 311.* ' J.S., *Mysterie of rhetorique,* 164.

[8] See above, Ch. 4, and below, Ch. 23.

' Roman Jakobson, 'Grammatical Parallelism and Its Russian Facet', in Stephen Rudy (ed) *Roman Jakobson: Selected Writings,* iii. *Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry* (The Hague, 1981) 98

[10] Marcus Fabius Quintilianus,£um////flnjŽnjn7wr« ofOra/ory;, *or, Education of an Orator* trans. J. S. Watson (2 vols.; London, 1856), ii. 146; for a helpful modem account of linguistic deviance' see G N Leech, 'Linguistics and the Figures of Rhetoric', in Roger Fowler (cd.). *Essays on Style and Language* (London, 1966), 135-56.

[11] Cited by Gordon, *Ronsard et la rhetorique*, 186.

that it take the form of‘interchangeable correspondencies in sentences, that though each touch not the other, yet each affronts the other’. In extreme cases, every word in one sentence might be ‘aggravated’ by opposition to every word in another.[12] According to Wilson, an especially effective *contentio* was the placing of evil immediately after good, as in the example; ‘many men now a daies for sobrietie, folowe gluttonie, for chastitie, take leachery, for truthe, lyke falsehode, for gentlenesse, seeke crueltie, for justice, use wrong dealyng, for heaven, hell, for God, the Devill.’[13]

It is surprising how many of these features can be found in just one brief example from demonology. Here is the English clergyman John Gaule trying to convey the awfulness of witchcraft. It was a great and terrible sin, he said, because it was

> the most malicious and immediate aversion from the greatest Good; and the most malicious and immediate conversion to the greatest Evill. For here is God Renounced and defied; and the Divell embraced and adored.[14]

This is virtually a perfect specimen of *contentio.* It also has three of the figural characteristics of syntactical symmetry—*parison* (consecutive clauses with the same structure), *isocolon* (consecutive clauses of the same length), and *anaphora* (consecutive clauses starting with the same word/s).[15] In the first pair of phrases, there is repetition of identical words together with the substituting of diametrically opposed ones. This has the effect of lulling the reader into one kind of expectancy and then ‘affronting’ him or her with the recognition of what is at stake. The juxtaposition of ‘aversion *from'* with ‘coMversion *to'* serves to highlight the ‘aggravation’ achieved by the rhetorical device even further. Thereafter, Gaule writes a sentence of two more exactly matched phrases, which nevertheless dramatically reverse the normal objects of the antithetical participles ‘renounced’/'embraced’ and ‘defied’/‘adored’. The sense of linguistic balance and the parallelism that attracted contemporaries aesthetically to *contentio* is clearly evident, but so too is the force of what Gaule wants to say. ‘Nothing floats ambiguously or tangentially from its reference’, is how Jonas Barish describes the effect of such prose; ‘every element is locked firmly in place by the logic of the syntax.’[16]

In fact, the construction of demonism in language was neither entirely, nor even mainly, a matter of *contentio.* Millions of words were published on the subject in the early modern era and it would be absurd to expect their composition to rest on only one of many available rhetorical forms. But authors resorted to it frequently enough to support what have been the principal arguments of this first group of chapters—that, like all systematic beliefs, conceptions of demonism and witchcraft had an overall shape that it is best to call linguistic, and that, in the pages of demonology at least, the very behaviour of devils and witches, too, conformed to the categories of language. We saw in the last chapter that to construe this behaviour in terms of logical and tropological contrariety (as a figure of thought) was to say something substantive about it, as well as exposing its irony. What follows are some typical examples of how a particular rhetorical figure (a figure of speech) was put to work to capture that behaviour in prose writing and communicate its meaning to readers. The examples are repetitive (by their very nature) and a few full instances, cited in the original language, will be enough to indicate a more general practice (in the next chapter we shall see that *contentio* was indispensable to depictions of the femininity of the early modern witch).

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[12] Hoskins, *Directions for speech and style,* 21-2; cf. Blount, *Academic ofeloquence*, 15.

” Wilson, *Arte ofrhetorique,* fo. 71*; on heaven/hell contrasts as an illustration of *contentio,* sec Francis Mercs, *Witts academy, a treasurie ofgoulden sentences similies and examples* (London, 1636), 740.

[14] Gaule, *Cases of conscience,* 18-19.

[15] 1 rely here on Vickers, *Francis Bacon,* 97, who describes syntactical symmetry in prose from the Greeks down to the 17th c.

[16] Barish, *Ben Jonson,* 37.

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Most obvious, perhaps, is the language that accompanied the true church/false church model of witchcraft. Martin de Castañega presented it in a string of antitheses focused on the contrasts: divine/diabolical, sacramental/execratory, full of grace/full of sin, pure/impure, ridiculous/honourable:

> Como en la Iglesia Católica hay Sacramentos por Cristo, que es Dios y Hombre verdadero, ordenados y establecidos, asi en la Iglesia Diabólica hay execramentos por el demonio y por sus ministros ordenados y señalados... Llámanse las tales cerimonias execramentos, que son contrarios a los sacramentos, porque los Sacramentos son vasos de gracia por la virtud que mediante ellos los que los reciben la consiguen; y los que reciben los execramentos no sólo no alcanzan gracia ni virtud, mas incurren en pecado de infidelidad, que es el mayor de los pedacos. ... los Sacramentos católicos valen y obran la gracia por razón, que son señales para ello por Dios instituidas; mas los execramentos diabólicos obran o responde el demonio con la obra, por razón de la diligencia, voluntad y malicia con que se procuran.... Contemplen en los Sacramentos católicos de la Santa Madre Iglesia, tan santos y tan limpios, por Cristo ordenados y establecidos, para en remedio de nuestros pecados; y miren con ojos muy claros la suciedad, vanidad y bellaqueria que consigo traen los execramentos y hechizos diabólicos, para engaño y condenación de sus familiares y secuaces, por el demonio señalados. Piensen las burlas y escarnios que hace el demonio de los que le siguen, y la honra que en este mundo tienen los que a Jesucristo siguen y sirven, y la gloria y el bien que en el otro para siempre esperan.”

A comparable example is King James’s attempt to prove that the ‘aping’ of religious service in modern witchcraft was the same in form as the ‘counterfeiting’ of God among the gentiles of the Old Testament:

> As God spake by his Oracles, spake [the devil] not so by his? As God has aswell bloudie Sacrifices, as others without bloud, had not he the like? As God had Churches sanctified to his service, with Altars, Priests, Sacrifices, Ceremonies and Prayers; had he not the like polluted to his service? As God gave responses by Vrim and Thummim, gave he not his responses by the intrails of beastes, by the singing of Fowles, and by their actiones in the aire? As God by visiones, dreames, and extases reveiled what was to come, and what was his will unto his scr-

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[17] Castañega, *Tratado,* 25-7,151-2. See trans, in Darst, ‘Witchcraft in Spain’, 302-3, 321, in Appendix A to this ch., p. 103. For a further Spanish example but in German translation, see Osuna, *Flaullum diaboli,* fos. 2’-4*.

> vantes; used he not the like meanes to forwarne his slaves of things to come? Yea, even as God loved cleannes, hated vice, and impuritie, and appoynted punishmentes therefore: used he not the like ... ? And feyned he not God to be a protectour of everie vertue, and a just revenger of the contrarie?[18]

Many other examples of linguistic *contentio* were inspired by 2 Corinthians 6: 1+-16, in which St Paul, after a long string of other antitheses, urged his readers to be 'not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the Temple of God with idoles?' Thus, Christoph Vischer, who ended up as general superintendent of Brunswick after a distinguished career as a reforming pastor, wrote that the magical use of blessings *(segen)* meant a reversal of the baptismal vows that broke the devil's hold over individuals and 'incorporated' them in Christ:

> Diesem unserm hochbethewcrtcm Tauffgeliibnis zuwider und zugegen handeln die verdamten, und von irem Vater dem leidigen Teuffel eingenommene und verblendte Segner, und die sich von den Teuffelsmeulern segnen lassen, die lassen sich zu seinen Instrumenten und Werckgezeugen gebrauchen, suchen bey irem abgesagten und verschwornem Feinde hiilffe, raht und trost, werden aus Christen unchristen, aus Himelsfürsten Hellriegel und Hellebrende, aus gesegneten verfluchte, aus Freunden Gottes Feinde Gottes, aus seligen verdampte, aus freyen, die der Son Gottes recht frey gemacht, und von der hand aller die sie hassen er löset, leibeigene Knechte und gefangene des leidigen Teuffels, aus Priestern des lebendigen Gottes des leidigen Teuffels schand Pfaffen.[19]

To the sceptical argument that belief in the wonders allegedly wrought by witchcraft undermined belief in the wonders truly wrought in the Gospels, Joseph Glanvill answered in terms of an outright contrariety between their authors:

> For, as to the Life and Temper of the Blessed and Adorable Jesus, we know there was an incomparable sweetness in his Nature, Humility in his Manners, Calmness in his Temper, Compassion in his Miracles, Modesty in his Expressions, Holiness in all his Actions, Hatred of Vice and Baseness, and Love to all the World; all which are essentially contrary to the Nature and Constitution of Apostate Spirits, who abound in Pride and Rancour, Insolence and Rudeness, Tyranny and Baseness, Universal Malice, and Hatred of Men:

So far, this is *contentio* involving individual nouns, sometimes between two opposites ('Humility'/'Pride': 'Love'/'Malice') and sometimes between the same noun given an opposed value by its context ('Hatred', 'Baseness'). Then Glanvill switches to *contentio of* sentences, all of them questions, all of them metaphors drawn from the

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[11] James VI and I, *Daemonologie,* 36-7.

[19] Christoph Vischer, *Einfelltiger... Bericht wider den ... Segen, damit man Menschen und Viehe ...zu heljjen vertmeinet* (Schmalkalden, 1571), sigs. Nii'-Niii^{r} (trans, in Appendix B to this ch., p. 104); cf. sig. Ov', where Vischer complained that 'Messers' failed to grasp the meaning of St Paul's rhetorical oppositions and jumbled Christ and Belial together by mixing words of negative (demonic) significance with their positive (godly) counterparts in their 'magical* utterances.

natural world, and all involving stark, even oxymoronic contrasts. How could the aims of saviour and seducer be anything but opposite?

> Can the Sun borrow its Light from the bottomless Abyss? Can Heat and Warmth flow in upon the World from the Regions of Snow and Ice? Can Fire freeze, and Water burn? Can Natures, so infinitely contrary, communicate, and jump in projects, that are destructive to each others known Interests? Is there any Balsom in the Cockatrices Egg? or, Can the Spirit of Life flow from the Venome of the Asp? Will the Prince of Darkness strengthen the Arm that is stretcht out to pluck his Usurpt Scepter, and his Spoils from him? And will he lend his Legions, to assist the Armies of his Enemy against him? No, these are impossible Supposals.[20]

As a Latin example, we may take Binsfeld's elaboration of the point that good angels and evil spirits exercised opposing influences over human beings. From contrary forms and principles, contrary effects were to be expected:

> Angelus custos et tutelaris recte agentibus adest, salutaria consilia suggerit, ad bonum incitat, ne in peccatum cadat, aut si ceciderit, statim resurgat, solicitat. Daemon susurrando semper ad peccatum instigat, mala consilia proponit, ad malum instruit, teporem et soporem immittit, mentem excaecat, ut homo in peccatis sordescat, laborat, omnia media fallacia adhibet, donec manibus pedibusque ligatum miserum hominem teneat, et pro sua perversa voluntate regat. Bonus Angelus dux et auctor homini existit, ut Dei nova creatura in Baptismo fiat, Deo in perpetuum, ut iustum est, suam servitutem et cultum impendat, et addicat: Diabolo et pompae eius abrenunciet. Daemon proprius in hoc detestabili maleficii opere instigator est, ut homo in primis professioni in Baptismo factae abrenunciet, Deo, B. Virgini et omnibus sanctis valedicat, sibi suam operam addicat, obedientiam praestet. Et sicut Iudith clarissima herois, angelum itineris sui et castitatis directorem inter prophanorum barbaras atque impuras manus propugnatorfujm habuit: sic daemoni cura est, ut hominem ad impurissimam libidinem inducat. Deinde quemadmodum Angelus Abacuc Prophetam in Babylonem tulit, ut prandium Danieli in lacu leonum traderet, et iterum in Iudaeam expedito negocio confestim reportavit, et in locum suum restituit: Ita daemon suum maleficum ad conventum defert, et peracta tragoedia magica, reportat ad locum in quo suscepit. Imo etiam sicut Angelus B Petrum, percusso latere eius excitavit e somno: Ita Daemon malefici etiam suum clientem e somno excitat, ut multorum confessionibus didicimus, ut congregationem et cursum adeat quando praescripto tempore conveniendum. Ubi et hoc occurrit notandum Sicut Abacuc oui nec Babylonem viderat et lacum nesciebat, ut Scriptura attestatur, a bono angelo ad locum longe situm et ignotum deferebatur. Ita malefici a suis Martinetis, aut Martinellis ut alinui vocant, nostri autem ut plurimum Amasios appellant, aliquando deducuntur ad loca ignota et multum remota, cum tamen putent, quod sint profecturi ad conventum vicinum.[21]

Finally, here is Rene Benoist's remarkably sustained vision of the C H/Q antithesis constructed from pairs of parallel statements beginnina i od/5atan a, ically 'Dieu' /'Ainsi Satan'. It occupies the whole of a chapter devoted"10^ Stroph' to the theme offline

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[20] Incnnh Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus: or, full and plain evidence concerning witches and apparitions,* . i i zu RO) cd C.O. Parsons (Gainesville, Fla., 1966), 101.

[21] Binsfeld, VwrM/ur, 155-6 (collated with the edn. of 1596, 190-2). For trans, see Appendix C to this ch., p. 104.

Le Singe diforme ne tasche davantagc imiter l'homme que fait lc diable felon, superbe ct envieux à contre-faire Dieu etemcl: et principalement Jesus Christ son object victorieux, et representer les sacrements de sa saincte divine et salutairc religion. Mais l'un est tout puissant, l'autre ne luy doit cstre comparé: l'un est veritable et la veritc mesme, l'autre menteur et autheur de mcnsonge: l'un est amy et sauvcur, l'autre est cnnemy et homicide des le commencement, lequel a voulu devorer l'enfant et perdre la mere ayant perverty plusieurs, ct tyré apres luy en damnation etemelle la troisicsmc partie des estoillcs du Cicl, Apocalyp. 12. chap. Dieu par son sainct esprit ct observance de son sainct et juste commandemcnt, a proposé de sa grace infinic sauver l'homme: Satan par lc siflle et doux parlcr du serpent, ensorcelant ct enchantant la femme negligentc, curieusc, et voluptuaire a perdu noz premiers parens trop legers el crcdules ct nous avec eux, mettant par inobedicncc la mort et pechć où Dieu avoit mis la vie et le salut. Dieu par sa parole a communiqué en tout temps son esprit ct benediction à ceux qui luy ont crcu et obey: aussi de tant de temps Satan a communique son venim ct maling esprit de malediction à ceux qui luy ont creu ct obey disant que wroo *ministrorum Satanae serpit tit cancer.* En Jesus christ est la scmence ct perfection de toule benediction: ct en Lucifer et en son Antechrist (antiteses de Dieu etemcl et de Jesus christ son fils tressainct ct en tout obcissant) impur et impudent, est la scmence ct comble de toute malediction et meschancete. Dieu et Jesus christ son fils ont ordonné lcur saincte ct salutairc religion en unc alliance fidelc de foy interieure et de profession exterieure par sacrements ct choses sacramentclles, par lesquelles choses la grace divine est donnee aux hommes fidelcs et obeissans: Ainsi Satan a des suasions interieures et verbales: et puis des professions et exerciccs en choses extemes, par lesquelles il semble tenir sa promesse comme Jesus Christ la sienne dissimulant son mcnsonge fallacieux pour plus aysement l'anoncer se faisant servir et adorer. Dieu etemcl des le commencement ayant proposé chasser Satan vainqueur de l'homme, qui avoit peché à sa suasion, destruire scs oeuvres et luy briser la teste par Jesus christ, au temps de sa nativité et manifestation, y a faict disposition de plus en plus operant le secret et mystere de justice, sanctification et justification jusques à cc qu'estant venu il a chassé lc fort armé l'ayant spolié et lié. Ainsi Satan de puis l'humaine redemption, Jesus Christ estant monté au cicl vainqueur et glorieux, n'a cessé et ne cessera d'operer lc misterc de son iniquité. 2 Thes. 2. cha. prenant avec luy toutes ses forces et puissances de sa malignité, jusques à ce que le fils de perdition ct homme de pechć I'Antechrist estant revclé et l'iniquite comblee il renverse à cause des pechez des hommes (Dieu le permettant ainsi) tout l'ordrc et profession de la religion cslablie par Jesus christ et son sainct esprit, operant par les pasteurs hicrarchiques. Ce pendant comme Jesus christ entretient son eglise par son sainct esprit et parle en l'cxercicc des sacrcmens, ainsi faict Satan sa synogogue et troupe maudite par son impur et maling esprit, duquel il a infecté et perdu les Anges et les hommes, en l'exercice Magique et vain de ses signes, ligatures, superstitions, et caraclcres.[22]

Here, the degree of antithesis is less extreme. The overall effect is achieved by the twinning of sentences rather than by exact parallelism in expressions and phrases. Instead of a strict contraposition of word for word there is a general contrariety between sets of paired propositions.

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[22] René Benoist, *Petit fragment catechistic,* in Massé, *De I'imposture,* 11-13 (trans, in Appendix D to this ch., pp. 104-5). Cf. [id.?], *Traicte óu opuscule contenant en brefl'excellence de la gloire et vie e ternelie,* printed in the preface to Vici, *Histoire de la vie.* Other extended French examples are in the second part of Lc Normant, *Histoire veritable et memorable*, entitled *De La Vocation des magiciens et magiciennespar le ministre des demons* (Paris, 1623), 588-90, and d'Autun, *L 'Incredulité sfavante,* 125-6.

Looking back through these examples one notices not simply the formulaic quality—rhetorical figuration based on the imitation of textbook models is, after all, likely to become standardized—but the suggestion of writing as a kind of ritual performance. The demands of rhetorical correctness, the chant-like, even invocatory repetition of antiphonic statements, and the resulting sense of elevated speech and ceremoniousness all reinforce the impression of sacred wisdom enunciated and secret revelations disclosed. There is a religiosity about the form of demonology, as well as its content, which helps to draw attention to the challenges it faces.[23]

Noticeable, too, is how this particular style of composition conforms broadly to the much more widespread linguistic phenomenon of strict parallelism, the contrived pairing of lines and verses in poetry, or of phrases and sentences in prose, which has been found in the ritual communications of many speech communities, from the cultures of the Old Testament to those in modern eastern Indonesia. According to Jakobson, 'poetic patterns where certain similarities between successive verbal sequences are compulsory or enjoy a high preference appear to be widespread in the languages of the world.'[24] One of the other leading ethnographers in this field, James J. Fox, has talked of traditional oral speech patterns in which parallelism is 'promoted to the status of a canon, and paired correspondences, at the semantic and syntactic levels, result in what is essentially a dyadic language—the phenomenon of speaking in pairs'.[25] This 'pairing' is of exactly the sort recommended in the rhetorical theory of the European Renaissance—either of two individual words in a 'dyadic set' or of two immediately adjacent sentences or couplets with grammatically homologous sequences. Unlike the examples we have been considering, it does not have to consist only of antitheses, since dyads may be paired because of their similarity as well as their opposition, and, indeed, because of other logical relationships between them; it is the relationship of pairing itself—the principle of binariness—that is important. Nevertheless, many dyads are related by antithesis, which is, as a result, typical of the phenomenon.[26]

The relevance of this broader ethnography is that it confirms that 'speaking in pairs' is invariably associated with the more fundamental cultural ordering provided by systems of dual classification. This is particularly true of eastern Indonesia, where the majority of languages are characterized by parallelism and many of the cultures are thoroughly dualistic in their social and cosmological categories. The dualistic inheritance provides a vocabulary of pairs for the speakers of ritual language to use, and their performance of the language in turn confirms and contributes to that inheritance.[27] Something similar may, therefore, be supposed in the European case, where the ordering of spoken or written language by *contentio* was particularly faithful to the ordering of categories by asymmetrical dualism. That writers on witchcraft should have turned to *contentio* at all is a helpful confirmation of this relationship and of the way it gave meaning to what they had to say. That they should have turned to it at particular points in their arguments suggests a desire—similar, as I have said, to that of the performer of a ritual—to alert their readers to what was being said at those moments. The highlighting itself could be done by formally, indeed artificially, departing from the linguistic norm—switching into a mode of address based on an obviously deviant rhetorical figure. But, in addition, the very shape of *contentio* made it the appropriate language code for these special occasions. When we look at them we find that they were invariably statements of the fundamentals of demonology. They were to do with the primal relationship between God and the devil and all that could be derived from it in the way of equivalences and contrasts. Like many examples from the ethnography of parallelism, they were not only 'idealized statements of a specific cultural order',[28] but gave expression to the powerful mythology that underlay it.

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[23] Barish, *Benjonton,* 38, on the ritual qualities of 'logical disjunction' in Shakespeare's prose.

[24] Jakobson, 'Grammatical Parallelism*, 98, and 99-106 for examples.

[25] James J. Fox (ed.), *To Speak in Pairs.' Essays on the Ritual Languages of Eastern Indonesia* (Cambridge, 1988), 'Introduction', 1-28 (quotation at 1). For the nature of canonical parallelism and its cultural diffusion I am also dependent on id., 'On Binary Categories and Primary Symbols: Some Rotincse Perspectives', in Roy Willis (ed.), *The Interpretation of Symbolism* (London, 1975), 99-132; id., ' "Our Ancestors Spoke in Pairs": Rotinese Views of Language, Dialect, and Code,' in Bauman and Shcrzer (eds.), *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking.* 65-85.

[26] Gregory Forth, 'Fashioned Speech, Full Communication: Aspects of Eastern Sumbanesc Ritual', in Fox (ed.), *To Speak in Pairs.* 154.

TRANSLATIONS

A. (see n. 17)

As in the Catholic church there are sacraments ordained and established by Christ who is true man and God, so in the diabolical church there are execrations ordained and fixed by the devil and his ministers. ... Such ceremonies are called execrations because the sacraments are vessels of grace by the virtue of which those who take them receive grace; and those who take the execrations receive neither virtue nor grace, but rather incur the sin of heresy, which is the worst of all sins.... the Catholic sacraments have value and work by way of grace and are signs instituted by God to give grace; but the diabolical execrations work by way of the diligence, antipathy, and malice that the devil creates. ...Contemplate the Catholic Sacrament of the Holy Mother Church, all saintly and clean, ordered and established by Christ for the remedy of our sins; and look with clear eyes at the filth, vanity, and foolishness that the diabolical execrations and bewitchments bring to deceive and condemn the devil's disciples and followers. Think about the mocking and ridicule that the devil heaps on those who follow him, and the honour that comes to those who follow and serve Jesus Christ, plus the glory and goods that await them in the other world.

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[27] Fox (ed.), *To Speak in Pairs,* Introduction, 26—7; cf. Fox, 'On Binary Categories', 110: 'A dyadic language of the kind used by Rotinese in their rituals is a formal code comprising the culture's stock of significant binary relations.' For a further example, see Forth, 'Fashioned Speech, Full Communication', 130, and for Indonesian dualism in general, Van der Kroef, 'Dualism and Symbolic Antithesis'; Traube, 'Obligations to the Source', in Maybury-Lewis and Almagor (eds.), *Attraction of Opposites,* 321-44; and in the same collection Fox, 'Category and Complement', 33-56, esp. 39-44.

[21] Fox, 'Binary Categories', 128.

B. (seen. 19)

Contrary to and against this our solemnly sworn baptismal vow are the actions of the damned blessers, besotted and deluded by their father the accursed devil; and those who allow themselves to be blessed by the devil's mouthpieces, those [same] let themselves be used as his instruments and tools, seek help, counsel, and comfort from the enemy they have renounced and abjured, [and] become, from being Christians, non-Christians, from being princes of heaven, the latch bolts and flaming fires of hell, from being blessed, cursed, from being friends of God, enemies of God, from being saved, damned, from being free, as the Son of God truly made them, releasing them from the hands of all that hate them, instead serfs and prisoners of the accursed devil, from being priests of the living God, shameful ministers of the accursed devil.

C. (seen. 21)

The guarding and protecting angel helps in acting well, supplies wholesome counsels, incites to the good, and takes care that a man does not fall into sin or, if he does, that he is quickly restored. By his murmurings, the demon always incites to sin, puts forward evil counsels, teaches evil, introduces lukewarmness and laziness, dulls the mind, strives so that a man may be soiled in sins, employs all deceitful means, while he holds the wretched man bound hand and foot, and rules as his perverted will. The good angel becomes the leader and adviser to a man, that he be made a new creature of God in baptism, apply and devote his service and worship to God forever, as is righteous, and renounce the devil and his retinue. The personal demon is the instigator in this detestable work of witchcraft, whereby a man renounces especially the promise made in baptism, takes leave of God, the blessed Virgin, and all the saints, devotes his service to him, and gives him obedience. And just as that most famous heroine Judith had an angel that guarded her journey and her chastity while she was in the barbarous and impure hands of the profane soldiers, so the demon takes pains to excite a man to the most foul lust. Then again, just as the angel brought the prophet Habbakuk into Babylon, so that he might deliver food to Daniel in the lions' pit, and then immediately brought him back into Judaea free of trouble, and returned him to his region; so the demon carries off his witch to the sabbat and, when the magical spectacle is completed, returns him to the place from which he took him. And yet again, just as the angel woke St Peter from the dream by striking his side; even so, the demon of the witch wakes his client from dreaming, as we learn from many confessions, so that he may undertake the journey and be at the congregation at the time prescribed for meeting. And notice where this occurs. Just as Habbakuk, who had not seen Babylon and did not know the pit, as is confirmed by the Scripture, was carried by the good angel to a strange place situated far away; so the witches are by their Martinet or Martincll, as some name him (ours, however, generally call him Amasios) sometimes led to an unknown and very remote region, even though they think that they are setting out for a sabbat nearby.

D. (seen.22)

The deformed ape does not strive more to imitate man than does the disloyal, proud, and envious devil to mimic the eternal God and, above all, Jesus Christ, the object of his victory, and perform the sacraments of his holy, divine and beneficial religion. But the one is all powerful, the other ought not to be compared to him; the one is true, even the truth itself, the other is a liar and the author of lying; the one is a friend and saviour, the other an enemy and murderer from the beginning, who wished to devour the infant and destroy the mother, having perverted many and drawn down after him into eternal damnation the third part of the stars in the heavens (Revelation 12:). By his holy spirit and the observing of his holy and just commandment, God proposed to save mankind by his infinite grace; by the hissing and smooth talk of the serpent, bewitching and enchanting the careless, curious, and sensual woman, Satan ruined our too fickle and credulous first parents and us with them, putting death and sin by disobedience where God had set life and salvation. In all ages, God by his word has imparted his spirit and benediction to those who have believed and obeyed him; for as many ages, Satan has imparted his poison and evil spirit of malediction to those who have believed and obeyed him, saying that 'the word of the ministers of Satan moves stealthily like a crab.' In Jesus Christ is the seed and perfection of all benediction; and in Lucifer and his foul and insolent Antichrist (antitheses of God eternal and of Jesus Christ his most holy and all-obedient son), is the seed and summit of all malediction and wickedness. God and Jesus Christ his son gave order to their holy and beneficial religion by a faithful alliance of internal faith and external profession by sacraments and sacramental things, by which means the divine grace is given to faithful and obedient men; and so Satan has his internal and verbal persuasions, and also professions and exercises in external things, by which he seems to keep his promise as Jesus Christ keeps his, concealing his misleading falsehood in order more easily to show himself being served and worshipped. Having from the beginning proposed to drive out Satan, the vanquisher of mankind, who sinned at his persuasion, and to destroy his works and bruise his head by Jesus Christ at the moment of his birth and appearance, the eternal God prepared for this by working more and more the secret and mystery of justice, sanctification and justification until, Christ having come, he expelled the strongly armed [devil], having despoiled and bound him. And so, since the redemption of man, Jesus Christ having ascended into heaven in victory and glory, Satan has not ceased and will not cease to work the mystery of his iniquity (2 Thessalonians 2), having with him all his forces and the powers of his malignity, until, with the son of perdition and man of sin the Antichrist being revealed and with iniquity at its height, he overturns, on account of the sins of men (God allowing him to do so), all the order and profession of the religion established by Jesus Christ and his holy spirit, working by means of the hierarchy of priests. Nevertheless, as Jesus Christ maintains his church by his holy spirit and speaks in the exercise of the sacraments, so does Satan maintain his synagogue and accursed company by his foul and evil spirit, with which he has infected and ruined the angels and men, in the magical and empty use of his signs, ligatures, superstitions, and characters.

8

Women and Witchcraft

> A woman, if she have superiority, is contrary to her husband.
>
> (Ecclesiasticus 25:30)

> There is a Text in women ...
>
> (Alexander Niccholes, J *discourse, of marriage and wiving* (1615))

IN *The arte of English poesie,* George Puttenham decided to break with tradition by personalizing each of the figures of classical rhetoric and giving it an English name that suggested its characteristic poetic role. For *antitheton* (i.e. *contentio)* he chose the name 'the Quarrellcr', 'for so be al such persons as delight in taking the contrary part of whatsoever shalbe spoken'.[1] He was saying that to speak or write in deliberately juxtaposed opposites was, in effect, to behave contentiously, just as rhetorical antithesis was the linguistic model for those who acted on the basis of opposition for its own sake. This is another reminder of the identity between saying and doing that has been a theme of this first group of chapters. In particular, it again reinforces the idea that the actions of witches and the language used to describe them had the same shape— the same poetics, as Puttenham now allows us to say. For he might well have illustrated 'the Quarrellcr' with verses on witchcraft, defined as it was in terms of ritualized contrariety.

What he does instead is scarcely less pertinent. He tells the tale of an 'importune and shrewd wife' who counters her husband 'all by contraries' and whose couplets are, in consequence, composed entirely of the 'quarrelling' figure.

My neighbour hath a wife, not fit to make him thrive,
But good to kill a quicke man, or make a dead revive.
So shrewd she is for God, so cunning and so wise,
To counter with her goodman, and all by contraries
For when he is merry, she lurcheth and she loures,
When he is sad she singes, or laughes it out by houres.
Bid her be still her tongue to talke shall never cease,
When she should speakc and please, for spight she holds her peace,
Bid spare and she will spend, bid spend she spares as fast,
What first ye would have done, be sure it shalbe last.
Say go, she comes, say come, she goes, and leaves him all alone,
Her husband (as I thinke) calles her overthwart Jone.[2]

The significance of this choice lies in the close links between shrewishness, scolding, and witchcraft in depictions of the 'overthwart' female in early modern Europe.[3] More especially, Puttenham's 'merry Epigrame' encourages us to move from contrariety in witches to contrariety in women, and to focus for a moment on the much debated issue of the sex-relatedness of witchcraft.

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[1] Puttenham, *Arte of English poesie,* 175.

[2] Ibid. 176.

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This is a topic that extends far beyond anything that can be dealt with here. Nevertheless, an approach concentrating on the structure of representations of witchcraft should have something to say about it. We have been dealing, after all, with how things meant what they meant. And the most pressing issue raised by the gender of witches concerns the relationship between what it meant, inside witch-accusing cultures themselves, to accuse someone of being a witch, and the wider conditions—let us call them 'social' for the moment—that, from an external perspective, seem to have produced 'accusable' people. Evidence of the overwhelming preponderance of female witches has naturally prompted the question why, in early modern Europe, women in general, and certain types of women in particular, were much more likely to be associated with the crime. 'The history of witchcraft', as one recent authority says, 'is primarily a history of women.'[4] But often the answer has been sought not so much in the culture-specific links between witchcraft and feminine behaviour articulated at the time, but in changes in the social situation of women that marginalized them (in whole or in part) and in consequence made them more susceptible in a general way to charges of deviance. One straightforward example is the suggestion that trends in population and in marriage patterns led to an increase in the number of women living alone as spinsters or widows. These two groups were already seen (mainly by men) as aberrations in societies that accepted the need for patriarchal control over domestic experience, but their new numerousness made them much more threatening.[5] A second, more complex example is the now familiar argument that in Tudor and Stuart England, economic and social changes, as well as different attitudes to charitable relief, turned local indigence—especially prominent among women of low status—into a liability that communities no longer knew how to discharge. Caught in ambiguous relationships with their neighbours, the female poor generated growing hostility by their persistent requests for help, and, at the same time, aroused feelings of guilt in those who were no longer willing to respond with charity.[6] A yet further variant is the discovery that in seventeenth-century New England irregularities occasionally disrupted the rules for keeping the devolvement of property in male hands and made some women actual or potential inheritors of large amounts of wealth. This involuntary challenge to the property system caused anxiety and fear in those around them and made economic power the underlying issue when accusations were subsequently brought against them.[7]

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[3] For 'overthwart* the *OED* gives 'inclined to oppose; perverse, froward, contrarious; contentious, captious, quarrelsome; adverse, contrary, hostile'.

[4] Carol F. Karisen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (London, 1987), p. xiii.

[5] Among many formulations, see the influential early statement by H. C. Erik Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany, 1562-1684* (Stanford, Calif., 1972), 184-6.

[4] K. V. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1971), 535-69. Carolyn Matalene, 'Women as Witches', *International J. Women's Stud.* 1 (1978), 573-87, does little more than restate the argument.

Arguments of this kind suggest how groups of women became (or were thought to have become) so anomalous in relation to contemporary (largely male) social norms that they readily attracted accusations. But what sort of accusations? What these arguments are less successful in showing—what, indeed, they cannot show in isolation from any consideration of what witchcraft *meant* in the cultures in question—is why accusations should have concerned *witchcraft,* rather than some other crime. This, after all, is the thing to be explained, rather than any general criminalization of women. The problem is that there is no necessary (i. e. conceptual) link that enables us to derive being a witch from being anomalous. The link can only be a contingent one; being anomalous might issue in some other kind of accusation—in fact, any kind of accusation—and the argument about its preconditioning role would still be as good. The unsatisfactory effect of this is that it treats the specific accusation of witchcraft as if it was a matter of accident. Nor does it help materially to stipulate that the accusation must have been available as a plausible alternative in the culture— as, of course, the crime of witchcraft was in these early modern examples. This narrows the range of possibilities but it does not lead us by any greater necessity to what we want to know—why witchcraft was the particular form of deviance associated with anomalous females. Besides, it must be doubted that witchcraft's cultural particularity as a form of deviance has been given enough priority in these examples if it can be shown to have been an appropriate crime for unpatriarchalized women, importunate women, and inheriting women all to have been accused of committing.[8] [9] How many other types of anomalous women will historians of witchcraft come up with? This is not a frivolous question, since, with the argument couched in these terms, the possibilities are endless and the problem unresolvable; for it could never be shown to have been an inappropriate crime to accuse women of, provided they were marginalized by one set of circumstances or another.

Moreover, these same difficulties in logic stand in the way of the view that witch-hunting was, in reality, women-hunting—simply one episode in the long history of the general oppression of women.' The more strongly this is argued, the more it too risks losing cultural specificity. In this case, of course, the marginalization of women becomes a reflection of gender rivalry. But, again, any crime will serve to express this rivalry* provided it is females who are accused of committing it and males who do the accusing. The fact that an accusation is specifically one of witchcraft becomes, once more, accidental; it is only being 'used' as a 'means' to achieve something else, namely the 'social control of women' or simply their oppression.[10] The result is that the things that make such an accusation what it is and enable us to identify it and interpret it—its semantic constituents, so to speak—are the very things that are left out of consideration or reduced to ideology'. This is not the way to get to know why, in any particular historical setting, women attracted accusations of witchcraft.

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[7] Karlsen, *Devil in the Shape of a Woman.* 77-116.

[8] The same traits of increasing female self-confidence and independence (c.g. through property ownership) have been alleged to explain the *low* incidence of witchcraft accusations in 'old' England and yet their prominence in New England; cf. Karlscn (n. 4 above) with Alan Anderson and Raymond Gordon, 'Witchcraft and the Status of Women: the Case of England', *British J. Sociology* 29 (1978) 171-84 (and see further on this and related issues, ibid. 30 (1979), 349-61). For some valuable cautions concerning the 'social' explanation of the femininity of the witch, see Susanna Burghartz, 'The Equation of Women and Witches: A Case Study of Witchcraft Trials in Lucerne and Lausanne in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries', in Richard Evans (ed.), *The German Underworld: Deviants and Outcasts in German History* (London, 1988), 65-71.

[9] Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism.* 4th edn. (London, 1987) 178-222; Silvia Bovcnschcn, 'The Contemporary Witch, the Historical Witch and the Witch Myth* The Witch* Subject of the Appropriation of Nature and Object of the Domination of Nature', *New German Critique*

It should be said at once that in each of the three examples I have cited, the cultural identity of witchcraft as a crime with specific meanings and implying specific kinds of behaviour in those accused of it is also brought into the argument. It appears, for instance, that the inheriting women of New England who were accused of witchcraft were deemed to have other dangerous attributes, besides their anomalous wealth, and that it was these that set them apart from women in the same economic position who were not so accused. The fact that these attributes included the personality traits of'overthwart Jone' indicates, in itself, that it was what communities expected of their witches that was crucial in their identification and accusation. 'The witch was a witch', it has been rightly said, 'by the very fact that the members of the community perceived her as such.'[11] But there is still a tendency for the logic to travel in an unworkable direction— that is to say, from the social circumstances of anomalous and marginalized women to the accusations made against them, as if the latter are best seen as the consequences of the former. And as long as this remains true, the logical impossibility of deriving a precise cultural artefact from a set of initial conditions will impede our understanding.

There is a reminder here of the issues with which this book opened. In this area, as in others, historians have been unwilling to concede that witchcraft had a reality for those who believed in it. They have preferred explanations that appeal to the 'social' as something primary and underlying in experience and behaviour. There has also been a strongly functionalist interest in what governs the behaviour of societies when coping with 'strains' and 'labelling' deviants. This too pre-empts any need to look closely at what a specific label signifies to those who employ it in a particular linguistic setting. If, for example, witches are to be seen primarily as the (female) scapegoats for (male) communal anxieties and failings, then it only matters that 'witch' was one of the labels to apply to women in early modern cultures, not that anyone should have signified something real, objective, and socially expressive when applying it.

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15 (1978), 83-119; Christine Faure, *La Démocratic sans les femmes: Essai surle libéraltsme en France* (Paris, 1985), 83.

[10] For a recent analysis couched in these terms, see Marianne Hester, *Lewd Women and Wicked Witches: A Study of the Dynamics of Male Domination* (London, 1992), 4,108,156,199.

[11] Eliane Camerlynck, 'Féminité ct sorcel!erie chez les théoriciens de la dćmonologie à la fin du Moyen Age: Étude du *Malleus Maleficarum\ Renaissance and Reformation,* 19 (1983), 17.

Our view is likely to be rather different if we turn the logic round and make it travel in the other direction: if we start not by asking ourselves why women were associated with witchcraft, but why contemporaries associated witchcraft with women. This assumes that it was what early modern communities themselves expected of witches that was crucial in their identification and accusation. Witchcraft, after all, was a cultural artefact—a crime that signified certain things and implied certain kinds of behaviour in those suspected and accused of it. Since one of these was that witches were likely to be female, and another that they were anomalous and marginal in the community, it hardly seems surprising that these should in fact turn out to be the case.

Reversing the stress in this way may seem to be unimportant but it could, in fact, be crucial. It acknowledges an important point made emphatically by Christina Lamer but still often neglected—that witches were accused not because they were women but because they were witches.[11] [12] This seems overwhelmingly true of the animosity they aroused among their neighbours and kin in the communities they lived in. It is all too often forgotten that a great many cases arose from accusations of harmful sorcery brought by the frightened and angry victims against those they genuinely believed to have caused it. Since harmful sorcery (in the form of‘sympathetic’ magic, spell-casting, and other popularly credited powers), as well as helpful sorcery that went wrong or was misinterpreted, were both practised, we may be faced with nothing more significant than a correlation between the sex of most ‘witches’ and the sex of most of the practitioners. In Toledo, for instance, 75 per cent of the cases of sorcery investigated by the local tribunal of the Inquisition between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries were against women, the majority of whom ‘had practised amorous or erotic rituals or spellcasting’.[13] Even without this, the evidence that local accusations were based on culturally founded perceptions of both the reality of *malejicium* and its origin in the powers of female specialists is overwhelming; only by refusing to accept the idea that reality can take radically different forms in different cultural settings can this evidence be ignored.[14]

But there is no strong evidence to show that this was not the case with the prosecuting authorities as well. Of course, the latter's notion of witchcraft (as we shall see next) embraced the idea that gender traits made women its more likely perpetrators; in this sense, an accusation of witchcraft from their direction presupposed a (negative) view of women. But this is precisely what made the crime intelligible as the crime it was perceived to be—an attack on society in collusion with a devil who, because of women's relative sinfulness and weakness, used them as his agents. There was, in other words, a conceptual compatibility at work here, and not merely an association of convenience.[15] It remains, then, a *question malposée* to ask why women were the main objects of witch prosecution when its main objects were witches who, for culturally specific reasons, were expected to be female.[16] If accusations were on the increase between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, this was not necessarily because women were more accusable in this period but because witches were—for reasons intrinsic to cultures who saw things this way.

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[11] Lamer, *Witchcraft and Religion,* 56,87; cf. cad., *Enemies of God: The Witch-Hunt in Scotland* (London, 1981), 102.

” Maria Helena Sanchez Ortega, ‘Woman as Source of “Evil” in Counter-Reformation Spain’, in Cruz and Perry (eds.), *Culture and Control,* 197 (citing Sebastian Cirac Estopaflan, *Los procesos de hechiceria en Castilla la Nueva: Tribunales de Cuenca y Toledo* (Madrid, 1942)); Ortega speaks of a ‘magical repertoire’ mainly practised by women in rural early modem Spain, and of the Church's intolerance towards women as responsible for converting these into witches (p. 208).

[M] For the view that the sexual attribution of dangerous powers to women was a ‘perdurable component of popular belief, see Clive Holmes, ‘Popular Culture? Witches, Magistrates, and Divines in Early Modem England’, in S. L. Kaplan (ed.), *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Berlin, 1984), 95.

Reversing the stress also helps to solve the methodological problems encountered earlier. If there was no internal link between being anomalous and being a witch, there most certainly was between being a witch and being anomalous. As we have seen, the notion of witchcraft carried with it a whole range of expectations about behaviour that not only did not match what was normal but was the very reverse of it. Exploring this notion and tracing its many complexities may still create empirical problems, of course. But by giving it priority we arrive by a better logical route at precisely those attributes that made witches aberrant or marginal figures in their communities.

Whether or not these turn out to be the same as those derived, so to speak in advance, from the analysis of the social circumstances of early modem women will necessarily be a matter of coincidence. For now the element of contingency, of accident, is reversed too, and any circumstances will do to generate witches so long as they occasion the behaviour—the 'overthwartness'—thought to be appropriate to witchcraft. That witches threatened patriarchal order was undoubtedly an aspect of the learned witchcraft paradigm, but this was not thought to depend on their marital status and did not apply in particular to spinsters and widows. That witches were demanding and vindictive towards their neighbours was an aspect of the popular witchcraft paradigm, but ordinary people could not resort to functionalist explanations as to why they reacted as they did. That witches became anomalously wealthy by diverting property from the normally male inheritors was never part of any idea of witchcraft, at any cultural level, either in the Old World or the New (most witches were, indeed, strikingly poor). To select it as a significant variable in the 'social' identity of the accused is, therefore, to misunderstand what it was that gave meaning to their alleged behaviour as witches, to the claims of the accusers, and to the reactions of the wider community—that is to say, all the ingredients in the unfolding of a witchcraft episode.

The ideas and beliefs, expectations and imaginings, confusions and prejudices, that clustered together to make up notions of witchcraft—what, in short, witchcraft

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” A point acknowledged by Anderson and Gordon, 'Witchcraft and the Status of Women', 174-5.

“ I have in mind remarks like those by Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden from History* (London, 1973), 5: 'During the seventeenth century many women were persecuted as witches', and Hester, *Lewd Women,* 114 ('the persecution of women as witches'), and 128 ('woman-murder').

signified—were not, of course, expressed only in texts (unless we accept Clifford Geertz's conception of symbolic action as 'acted document'). But neither were they merely the reflections of the social circumstances of women. They informed the actions of all those involved in a witchcraft episode—made them actions of a certain sort—and were no doubt modified in the process of being enacted. They were thus inescapably 'social' in their expression, just as the 'social' dimensions of the episode were already construed and experienced in terms of the meanings shared or contested by the participants. Calling this unity of meanings and circumstances the 'culture' of the episode, one suspects that it is the cultural history of witchcraft accusations that will eventually reveal why so many witches were women.

* * *

Meanwhile, the question remains: why, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was witchcraft meant to be a crime committed mainly by women? Answering this question across the entire spectrum of opinions is, again, well beyond the scope of this study. The views of the majority, crucial as they no doubt were in the initial formation of suspicions and accusations, will therefore have to be neglected.[17] Even staying with contemporary demonology leaves aside the important intellectual prehistory of the gender link and its transmission down to the fifteenth century. But in so far as early modern demonology had its own role in expressing and shaping opinions, its statements on the matter are obviously of relevance. And if witch-prosecuting was, as Joan Kelly has written, the 'single most horrendous expression [of misogyny] in early modern Europe',[18] then we ought, in particular, to find woman-hating in abundance in those who most actively supported it.

The problem is that we do not. What the witchcraft writers said about women turns out to be much less striking in content and much less insistently put forward than has often been suggested. It was certainly not at all elaborate, amounting to three groups of propositions, drawn on with almost formulaic uniformity. First, it was assumed as a general principle that women were by nature weaker than men in respect to fundamental intellectual and psychological qualities, and, hence, had what one author called a 'greater facility to fall'.[19] According to the *Malleus inaleficarum* they could not grasp spiritual matters adequately and were credulous and impressionable in their beliefs. At the same time, their 'inordinate affections and passions' made them resentful of authority and difficult to discipline, so that they were always a potential threat to God’s order. The key to their wickedness lay, above all, in their carnal appetites, which were far greater than those of men.[20] Women were thus feeble in mind and unstable in behaviour, inherently imperfect creatures from whom evil and depravity were only to be expected.

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[17] For a stimulating and persuasive account of gender and witchcraft, drawing on cases from the village communities of Lorraine, see Robin Briggs, 'Women as Victims? Witches, Judges, and the Community', *French Hitt.* 5 (1991), 438-50. The significance of women's participation in English witchcraft trials as accusers or witnesses is considered by J. A. Sharpe, 'Witchcraft and Women in Seventeenth-Century England: Some Northern Evidence', *Continuity and Change,* 6 (1991), 179-99; id., 'Women, Witchcraft and the Legal Process', in Jenny Kermode and Garthine Walker (eds.), *Women, Crime and 'the Count in Early Modem England* (London, 1994), 106-24; and Clive Holmes, 'Women: Witnesses and Witches', *Past and Present*\ 140 (1993), 45-78.

[11] Joan Kelly, 'Early Feminist Theory and the *Querelle des Femmes,* 1400-1789', Swr 7 *oHVomenin Culture and Society,** (1982),27.

” Alexander Roberts, *A treatise of witchcraft* (London, 1616), 43.

It was an obvious and easy second step to move from these general failings to the idea that women were the devil’s preferred target. ‘Where he findeth easiest entrance, and best entertainement’, insisted William Perkins, ‘thither will he oftnest resort.’[2]’ Weak understanding and frail belief meant that women were more likely to turn to superstition, more easily deceived by demonic illusions and promises, and sooner persuaded, in the end, to abjure even their faith. Inconstancy was a trait that women and devils had in common; so too were ambitiousness and lustfulness. The centrepiece of the argument in the *Malleus maleficarum* was that ‘All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable ... Wherefore for the sake of fulfilling their lusts, they consort even with devils.’[22] Almost without exception writers on witchcraft reminded their readers that it was Eve who had first been seduced into sin and Adam who was in turn tempted by Eve, making the devil, as King James put it, ‘homelier with that sexe sensine’.[23] Some even called Eve the first witch, an association that, more than any other, makes intelligible the gender link that they all relied on.[24]

But witchcraft required yet more vices in women. The third element in the argument was to explain any other specific features of the crime in terms of characteristically feminine failings and handicaps. For example, women were both curious and loquacious—‘tongueripe’, as Richard Bernard called them.[25] This made them more eager than men to know forbidden things but less capable of keeping them to themselves. They were, besides, mendacious, proud, vain, and greedy, weaknesses that the devil could exploit in the early stages of his campaign to secure them. Elaborating on female cupidity, Jean Bodin and Pierre Crespet claimed that the viscera of women were physically enlarged, whereas men, because of their prudence, had bigger heads. Crespet also argued for a general affinity between the hideousness of old women and the repulsiveness of the demonic, and he further suggested that bewitching had a physiological basis in the vapours and excretions emitted when melancholic and menstrual blood predominated in their bodies.[26]

More than anything else, women were malicious, rancorous, and vindictive:

> this sex, when it conceiveth wrath or hatred against any, is unplacable, possessed with unsalable desire of revenge, and transported with appetite to right (as they thinke) the wrongs offered unto them: and when their power herein answereth not their will, and are meditating with themselves how to effect their mischievous projects and designs, the Divell taketh the

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[20] [Krämer and *Sprenger], Malleus maleficarum,* 111-25.

[11] Perkins, *Discourse,* 169.

[22] [Krämer and Sprengerj, *Malleus maleficarum,* 122.

[22] James VI and I, *Daemonologie,* 44.

[24] Boucher, *Couronne mystique,* 584; Gaule, *Cases of conscience,* 10-11: ‘it is whispered that our Grandame Eve was a little guilty of such a kind of Society.'

[21] Bernard, *Guide to grand-jury men,* 88-9.

[24] Crespet, *Deux Livres,* fos. 164*—165’; Bodin, *Démonomanie,* fos. 224‘-225*.

> occasion, who knoweth in what manner to content exulcerated mindes, windeth himselfe into their hearts, offereth to teach them the meanes by which they may bring to passe that rancor which was nourished in their breasts, and offereth his helpe and furtherance herein.[27]

Even light displeasure, thought Bernard, would turn a women to the devil; this made more work for him, as well as satisfying their pride and eagerness to command.[28]

These dismal misogynisms have often been reviewed and, in recent years, often regretted. In voicing them witchcraft writers are held to have played a major role in promoting aggression against women on a European scale, as well as venting the various sexual fantasies and anxieties of their sex and professional group. Yet the cultural distance separating their views about women from today's is no greater or lesser than that which divides their science, their religion, or their politics from the modern equivalents. We should not, therefore, be shocked by difference alone. And since, in these other areas, we normally pay attention to the meanings of enunciated beliefs, without immediately condemning them or reducing them to psychological causes, we should perhaps do the same with demonological misogyny too.

The results are not, admittedly, very startling, but this, in itself, is an important point. The association of witchcraft with women was, it seems, built on entirely unoriginal foundations; indeed, it was built on what, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, had become the merest of cliches. It incorporated traditional Aristotelian notions regarding the innate imperfections of women as 'deformed' males, and the even more deeply entrenched Christian hostility to women as originators of sin. It drew, as did all contemporary writings on women's nature, on familiar, well-rehearsed pronouncements by St Paul, the fathers, and the medieval philosophers and theologians. Female *imbecillitas,* for example, had been a routine theme in medieval religious and juridical literature, while the metaphor of the woman as*jatttta diaboli* derived from Tcrtullian's *De cultu feminarum.*[13] That women were by nature inferior to men, and that Satan 'first assailed the woman, because ... she being the weaker vessel was with more facility to be seduced'[30] were among the most thoroughly commonplace ideas of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They were found everywhere in France, it has been said, 'from theology to the little books of the *bibliotheque bleue'.*[3'] All the supposed female vices and faults on which writers on demonology relied, and many more besides, were extensively listed and debated—in fact, more extensively listed and debated—outside the context of witchcraft; for example, in sermons and the literature of casuistry, in collections of aphorisms and commonplaces like those intended for use by Counter-Reformation preachers, and in legal manuals like André Tiraqueau’s *De legibus connubialibus?*[1] They were exhaustively treated by the contributors to two important literary debates, the French *querelle des femmes* and what Linda Woodbridge has called ‘the formal controversy[1] about women in Tudor and Stuart England.[33] There is nothing in French demonology, for example, to compare with the thoroughness and the venom with which women were attacked by Gratien Du Pont, Sieur de Drusac, in his *Les Controverses des sexes masculin et femenin* (1534), or Alexis Trousset in his *Alphabet de rimperfection et malice des femmes* (1617).[34] ‘Stage’ misogyny also led to vituperations of women unparalleled in the literature of witchcraft. Although often undercut by humour or rhetorical contrivance, it bears witness, in the very artificiality of its litanies of female vices, to the widespread currency of literary attacks on women.

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[27] Roberts, *Treatise of witchcraft,* 43.

“ Bernard, *Guide to grand-jury men,* 90.

” There are useful summaries of these themes in Jean Delumeau, *La Peur en Occident (Xtr-Xt'ltf)* Paris, 1978), 309-13; Katharine M. Rogers, *The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature* (London, 1966), 14-22,56-99; Eileen Power, *Medieval Women,* ed. M. M. Postan (Cambridge, 1975), 9-34; Maclean, *Renaissance Notion of Woman,* 15. The relevant texts are brought together in Alcuin Blamires (ed.), *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended* (Oxford, 1992).

” Rachel Spcght, *A mouzellfor Melastomus, the cynicall bayter of, andfoule mouthed barker against Evahs sex* (1617), 4, cited in Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, J540-1620 (Urbana* and Chicago, 1984), 90.

[11] Briggs, *Communities of Belief,* 250.

The experts on witchcraft were not, therefore, in any way eccentric in what they said about women as such. As with so many of the other topics covered in this book, they were entirely representative of their age and culture. What is still more striking is that, even though they obviously broadened the traditional areas of feminine evil and impurity by accusing women of outright service to the devil, they showed little interest either in exploring the gender basis of witchcraft or in using it to denigrate women. It is simply not the case that ‘sixteenth-century demonologists spent much time puzzling over why women were so much more wicked than men’, or that they, more than any other males, spoke the language of sexual violence, were obsessed with female sexual purity, and saw women as the central issue in witchcraft.[3S] Certainly, there is a great deal of gratuitous misogyny in the passage in the *Malleus maleficarum* where all the arguments are set out. But over-reliance on this one text has obscured the almost mechanical nature of its arguments, citations, and illustrative tales, as well as the existence of a yet more explicit clerical misogyny in other fourteenth- and fifteenth-century writings—notably, as Jean Delumeau has shown, in Alvaro

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[12] Delumeau, *La Peur,* 315-7,323-5,329; Rogers, *Troublesome Helpmate*, 107; Maclean, *Renaissance Notion of Woman, passim.*

[22] For France, see L. M. Richardson, *The Forerunners of Feminism in French Literature ofthe Renaissance from Christine of Pisa to Marie de Goumay* (Baltimore, 1929), *passim;* Ian iMaclean, *Woman Triumphant: Feminism in French Literature, 1610-1652* (Oxford, 1977), 25—63; Faure, *La Democratic sans les femmes,* 49-90. For England, see Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance,* esp. 13-136; Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus (eds.), *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about* ***Women in England 1540–1640***(Champaign-Urbana and Chicago, 1985), 3-46; Rogers, *Troublesome Helpmate,* 100-59; Suzanne W. Hull, *Chaste, Silent, and Obedient: English Books for Women 1475-1640* (San Marino, Calif., 1982), 106-26 (bibliography of contributions to the controversy); Louis B. Wright, *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1935), 465-507; Carroll Camden, *The Elizabethan Woman: A Panorama of English Womanhood, 1540-1640* (London, 1952), 239-71. On the debates in Europe generally, see Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana and Chicago, 1956), 5-37, and bibliography (326-424).

[24] In attributing the zf/pAu^rto Trousset, I follow Maclean, *Woman Triumphant,* 31. For virulent anti-feminism, sec ibid. 8,30-5,64-71.

[25] Lamer, *Witchcraft and Religion,* 87; Hester, *Lewd Women,* 108,118, 111. I also dissent here from the stress placed on the sexual aspects of the witchcraft stereotype by Joseph Klaits, *Servants of Satan: The Age of the Witch Hunts* (Bloomington, Ind., 1985), 51-9,65-74.

Pelayo’s *De planctu ecclesiae.*[36] There are also some texts from the later period, like Andreas Celichius’s *Notwendige Errinnerung. Vonn des Sathans letzten Zornsturm* (1595), that seem to indulge in insulting women for its own sake.[37] On the whole, however, the literature of witchcraft conspicuously lacks any sustained concern for the gender issue; and the only reason for the view that it was extreme and outspoken in its anti-feminism is the tendency for those interested in this subject to read the relevant sections of the *Malleus maleficarum* and little or nothing else.[38]

Where is there a substantial and careful analysis of the topic in demonology?3’Jcan Bodin’s was perhaps the most important and widely discussed treatment of witchcraft in the period when witch trials were everywhere on the increase. But in the body of his *De la démonomanie des sorciers* the question of w'hy witches were women was entirely ignored. Only in the appended ‘Refutation des opinions de Jean Wier’ did he remark, entirely casually, on the ‘bestial cupidity’ of women, their lack of wisdom, and the attention given by Satan to Eve.[40] In the greatest Counter-Reformation compendium of magic and witchcraft matters, Martin Del Rio’s *Disquisitionum magicarum,* the subject is not dealt with in connection with the witchcraft of the demonic pact and the sabbat but during a discussion of the reliability of different types of divination.[41] Of the notorious witch-hunting magistrates, Henri Boguet makes virtually no reference to it, Nicolas Rémy gives it a trifling mention, and only Pierre de Lancre treats it at any length, and then derivatively.[42] Another major Catholic work, Pierre Binsfeld’s *Tractatus de confessionibus maleficorum et sagarum,* offers women’s greater despondency in tribulation and more angry desire for revenge as reasons for the devil’s success in winning them over—but with no discussion and no additional exploration of the general theme.[43] Among Protestant witchcraft experts, authors as significant as William Perkins and King James VI and I give it little attention, and Lambert Daneau, Francois Perrault, David Meder, and Bernhard Albrecht no attention at all.

Searching across Europe one realizes just how many other writers neglected the gender issue, either totally or by according it only perfunctory treatment: in Ger-

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[54] Delumcau, *La Peur,* 317-23, calls it ‘lc document majeur de l’hostilite clericale a la femme’, and says that it could not fail to issue in a justification for witch hunts.

” Andreas Celichius, *Notwendige Errinnerung. Vonn des Sathans letzten Zornsturm und was es auffsich habe und bedeute, das nun zu dieser zeit so vie! Menschen an Leib und Seel vom TeufTel besessen werden* (Wittenberg, 1594), sigs. D3^t.

’* A point reinforced by Sharpe, ‘Witchcraft and Women’, 180. For a reliable account of these sections of *Malleus maleficarum,* sec Camcrlynck, ‘Fcminite et sorcellerie’, 13-25; Spierenburg, *Broken Spell,* 117, rightly points out that, for the authors, the inferiority of women was ‘self-evident’.

” For a convenient survey of citations on the subject, which also bears out my argument, see Nikolaus Paulus, *Hexenwahn und Hexenprozess vornehmlich itn 16. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1910), 195-247.

[40] Bodin, *Démonomanie,* fos. 224*-225*.

[41] Martin del Rio, *Disquisitionum magicarum* (Lyons, 1608), 264-6, esp. 265 (first pub. 1599-1600).

[41] Rémy, *Demonolatry,* 56; de Lancre, *Tableau de I'inconstance des mauvais anges et demons,* 48-64, but see also id., *Tableau de I'inconstance et instabilite de toutes choses, ou ilest monstre, qu ‘en Dieu seulgist la t-rave Constance, a laquelle I'homme sage doit* tirrr, 2nd edn. (Paris, 1610), fos. 49’-66'.

[41] Binsfcld, *Tractatus,* 143.

many, Elich and Samson; in France, Benoist (who cautioned against exaggeration), Birette, Massé, Michaëlis, Crcspet, Serclier, and Dupleix;[44] in Spain, Valderrama, Maldonado, and Torreblanca;[45] in Italy, Grillando and Guazzo;[46] in England, Henry Holland and Thomas Cooper.[47] This is a general omission—even silence—that makes some recent comments on the anti-feminism in demonology seem very exaggerated.[48] Writers on witchcraft evidently took for granted a greater propensity to demonism in women, and everything about their cultural make-up encouraged them to do so. The connection was so obvious to them, so deep-rooted in their beliefs and behaviour, that they felt no need to elaborate on it or indulge in additional woman-hating to back it up.[49] [50] In this respect, they were more like than unlike those creative writers of whom Katharine Rogers has said, '[they] did not exploit witchcraft as a means of expressing misogyny; their witches ... are seen as *witches* rather than as wicked *women.™* High on the agenda of modern social and cultural historians, the femininity of the witch was low on the agenda of demonologically interesting issues—more a presupposition than a problem.

If anything, it was more actively relied on by those who did *not* believe in the existence of witchcraft and who therefore opposed witchcraft prosecutions. Just as belief in witchcraft depended on nothing more than conventional misogyny, so doubts about witchcraft's reality were not accompanied by anything that might be called an enlightened notion of women. The usual sceptical view (in its own way thoroughly demonological) was that the pact and the sabbat were either self-imaginings of 'witches', or, more likely, planted by the devil as dreams and fantasies in their heads. Whichever way one looked at it, this required a version of female frailty and gullibility that was even more emphatic and all-embracing. Witchcraft as something that could be intended and accomplished in the realm of fact had to be entirely supplanted either by mental delusions induced by 'female' conditions like melancholy or hysteria, or by mental trickery wrought by scheming devils in fully receptive—that is to say, female—minds. The femininity of the witch was now the reason for doubting the reality of her actions, rather than the grounds for accepting her active collaboration with evil. But it was still femininity viewed in wholly negative terms.[51]

Indeed, the same negative terms. When the sceptic Johann Weyer came to explain witchcraft away as the product of demonic prestigitation he began by saying that the devil exploited the inconstancy, superficiality, malice, impatience, melancholy, and uncontrolled affections of women in general, and the frailty, stupidity, and mental instability of old women in particular. Hence his assault on Eve. Cited in support of female credulity and weakness were the usual *loci classici* of the late Renaissance notion of women—including 1 Peter 3: 7, Chrysostom’s homilies on Matthew, and Book IX of Aristotle’s *Historia animalium.* Like Varro, Lactantius, and St Augustine, Weyer thought it noteworthy that *mulier* was a word with affinities with *mollities.* Like Quintilian, he thought that woman was ‘an imbecile thing’. After referring to the canon laws that acknowledged the inferiority of women, Weyer concluded—along with most orthodox witchcraft writers—that Plato had good reason to doubt whether they should be classed among the creatures of reason or among the brute beasts.”

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[44] For these French authors, see Stuart Clark, 'The "Gendering" of Witchcraft in French Demonology: Misogyny or Polarity?', *French Hist.* 5 (1991), 429-31.

[45] Francisco Torreblanca [Villalpando], *Daemonologia sive de magia naturali, daemoniaca, licita, et illicita, deque aperta et occulta, interventione et invocatione daemonis* (Mainz, 1623), 336.

[44] Grillando, *Tractatus de sortilegiis,* in *Malleus maleficarum* (1669 cdn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 2), 275, cf. 243; Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum,* 137 (in connection with false revelationsand visions).

[47] On Perkins's 'brief and 'uncontrovcrsial' remarks, sec Sharpe, 'Witchcraft and Women', 181.

[44] Madeleine Lazard, *Images littéraires de la femme à la Renaissance* (Paris, 1985), 228, even calls it a 'collective psychosis'.

[49] One authority, Martin de Castaficga, declared that there were just as many male 'warlocks *(nigromànticos?* in the devil's service as female witches. The real difference, he said, was 'not among the ministers of the devil but among the different manners the devil uses to deceive and contract familiarity' with humans; *Tratado,* 305. Otherwise, Castahega paraphrased *Malleus maleficarum* on this subject.

[50] Rogers, *Troublesome Helpmate,* 148 n. 16 (author's italics).

[51] This was realized al the time by d'Autun, *L Tncredulité sfavante,* 61.

This, we remind ourselves, is the Weyer who denounced witch-hunting, not witches, as the scourge of European society. As for later sceptics—men like Johann Georg Godelmann and Tobias Tandler—they exhibited the same degree of misogyny and cited the same authorities in exonerating women from the guilt of diabolism. Godelmann, for example, said that the devil was able easily to mislead women because the female sex was ‘slippery, credulous, malicious, feeble-minded, [and] melancholic’, and that he had a special power over ‘worn-out, stupid, ignorant old women, who were badly instructed in the Christian faith and reeling in their understanding’.[53] Later, Friedrich von Spec warned that judges ought to take great care over accusations of witchcraft against women since they were ‘often crazy, insane, light, garrulous, inconstant, crafty, mendacious [and] perjured’.[54] That through feeble understanding and inconstancy of belief women could be deceived into accepting anything was thus the subject of consensus on all sides of the witchcraft debate, and only much later was Girolamo Tartarotti able to imply that misogyny itself was responsible for the femininity of the witch.[55] Meanwhile, Weyer was to become the specific target of Bodin’s ultra-orthodoxy, yet Bodin also relied on Plato’s dilemma in categorizing women. There are evidently no easy equations in the history of misogyny.

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[12] Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum,* 180-3, see also 187-9; cf. id., *De lamiis liber: item de commentitiis ieiuniis* (Basel, 1577), col. 30.

” Johann Georg Godelmann, *Tractatus de magis, veneficis et lamiis deque his rede cognoscendis et puniendis* (3 vols. in 1; Frankfurt/Main, 1591), ii. 7-8 (commentary on this passage in H. C. Erik Midelfort, ‘Johann Weyer and the Transformation of the Insanity Defense’, in R. Po-Chia Hsia (ed.), *The German People and the Reformation* (London, 1988), 253-5); cf. Tobias Tandler, *Dissertatio defascino et incantatione* (Wittenberg, 1606), 10-11. For other examples, see Hermann Witekind [pseud. ‘Augustin Lcrcheimer’j, *Christlieh Bedencken unnd Erinnerung von Zauberey,* 3rd edn. (Speier, 1597), repr. in Carl Binz, *Augustin Lercheimer und seine Schrift wider den Hexenwahn* (Strasburg, 1888), 13,44-5. This feature of sceptical views on witchcraft was recognized by Paulus, *Hexenwahn und Hexenprozess,* 228-31.

M [Friedrich von Spec], *Cautio criminalis, seu de processibus contra sagas* (Rinteln, 1631), 18, see also 330.

” Girolamo Tartarotti, *De congresso nottumo delle lammie* (Rovereto, 1749), 106-7.

There are, however, some false appearances. The very fact that the connection between witchcraft and women was taken largely for granted on the surface of demonological texts invites—demands, even—an interpretation of them at another level. This is not merely because of the general but unremarkable fact that the things omitted from writing, or dealt with summarily, can be as revealing as those that it contains. More especially, readers of texts have recently been urged to focus on precisely the silences we have just been considering— areas of writing where arguments are presented as self-evident and timeless truths, whose obviousness stems from their conformity to some natural state of affairs. For a truth that is portrayed as natural is, nevertheless, fashioned by thought and utterance—it is something artificial. And what is expressed casually and without apparent effort may, very often, be the product of considerable intellectual and ideological work—even if the signs of this have been all but effaced.[54] * [56]

This seems to be the case with the gendering of witchcraft, which, like so many other aspects of early modern thought, turns out to be reliant on the binary thinking we examined in earlier chapters. We would expect systems of dual symbolic classification, where they obtain, to embrace the categories of gender, and in every instance this seems to be the case. In fact, the polarity male/female is often a primary form of symbolic differentiation in cultures, even if it exerts its overarching influence in conjunction with some other basic dualism. Robert Hertz argued, for example, that ‘primitives’ attributed a sex to everything in their universe but that this rested in turn on a religious distinction between the sacred (male) and the profane (female).[57] For Pierre Bourdicu, writing of the Kabyle, ‘the limit *par excellence*[1] is the one between the sexes.[58] Others have noted the twin dominance of male/female and right/left, and of male/female and culture/nature.[59] Whatever its influence over representational systems as a whole, the gender relation is hierarchically weighted so that, once the processes of interchangeability, reinforcement, and correlation have had their effect, men are symbolically associated with a range of other positive items and categories, and women with their negative counterparts.[60] The results of these associations are, naturally, the subject of discussion by those whose lives they inform, and, at this level, are simply what they are affirmed to be in the culture in question—usually, eternal and essential truths derived from the natural or divine order. At the level of analysis, however, they can be seen as products of the mode of classification itself—its 'work', so to speak. For it is scarcely possible to *deduce* the attributes of (say) left-ness from those of femininity (or the reverse); the same can be said of other 'feminine' items and categories that typical appear in such 'metaphoric chains'[61]—nature, wildness, impurity, inauspiciousness, disorder, and so on. Their association stems from the fact that they are all found on the 'negative' side of the classification system; they enjoy the same metaphorical relationships as those between right-ness and masculinity, and the comparable range of, again non-deducible, 'positives'. The important point is that items or categories are (1) ascribed to one or other side, and (2) associated with others on the same side, not because of any intrinsic attributes but because of (1) their relationship (of difference) to their opposites, and (2) their relationship (of similarity) to their analogues.

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[54] Stephen Grccnblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning,* 23; cf. in a comparable subject area to mine from the 19th c., Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work oJGender in Mid-Victorian England* (London, 1988), 1-23, and *passim* (I am grateful to Joan Scott for bringing this to my attention).

[57] Hertz, ‘Pre-eminence of the Right Hand*, 9.

[M] Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice,* 211, and see also 214-19.

” For explorations of the latter, see the contributions to MacCormack and Strathcrn (eds.), *Nature, Culture and Gender,* esp. Carol P. MacCormack, ‘Nature, Culture and Gender: A Critique’, 1-24. As a particular example, see Bradd Shore, ‘Sexuality and Gender in Samoa: Conceptions and Missed Conceptions’, in Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead (eds.), *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality* (Cambridge, 1981), 192-215. For further typical binaries, see Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Jane Monnig Atkinson, ‘ “Man the Hunter and Woman”: Metaphors for the Sexes in Ilongot Magical Spells’, in Willis (ed.), *Interpretation of Symbolism,* 43-75.

[60] For this reason, binary thinking has itself been seen as an essentially masculine mental trait, the imposition by authority of the superiority of one term over the other being interpreted as a characteristically masculine act; see Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (eds.), *Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (London, 1988), 14 n. 6, and for an illustrative case, Edwin Ardcncr, ‘Belief and the Problem of Women’,

Of course, attributes flow readily *from* these relationships and, indeed, constitute the language in terms of which the relationships are acknowledged and explored. But these are conferred attributes, reflecting, not causing, the workings of the classification system itself. As Rodney Needham has put it: 'the categorization of a term is not in principle deducible from any one of its properties'; on the contrary, its properties are better seen as the products of its categorization. Thus the association between femininity and other 'negative' terms rests (in his view) only 'on analogy', and is derived from a mode of categorization which orders the scheme, not from the possession of a specific property by means of which the character or presence of other terms may be deduced.'[62]

The role of opposition and contrariety in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century gender systems is potentially a vast subject. Fortunately, it is one of the central themes of Ian Maclean's *The Renaissance Notion of Woman*—a study of what he calls the 'intellectual infrastructure' of early modern thought. Maclean begins, significantly, with a dual classification scheme which—as Geoffrey Lloyd has also shown—is fully consistent with the examples from modern anthropology. This is the scheme of opposites attributed to the Pythagoreans in which one column allowed for the association of male with limit/odd/one/right/square/at rest/straight/light/good, and the other, the association of female with unlimited/even/plurality/left/oblong/

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in id., *The Voice of Prophecy and Other Essays* (Oxford, 1989), 72-85. On masculine control of binary systems of gender in modern culture, see Catherine King, 'Making Things Mean: Cultural Representation in Objects', in Frances Bonner, Lizbcth Goodman, Richard Allen, Lindajancs and Catherine King (eds.), *Imagining Women: Cultural Representations and Gender* (Cambridge, 1992), 17-18.

“ The terms are used by Stanley Brandes, 'Like Wounded Stags: Male Sexual Ideology- in an Andalusian Town', in Ortner and Whitehead (eds.), *Sexual Meanings,* 220.

“ Rodney Needham, 'The Left Hand of the Mugwe: An Analytical Note on the Structure of Meru Symbolism', in Needham (ed.), *Right and Left,* 121,117; cf. Jordanova, 'Natural Facts: A Historical Perspective on Science and Sexuality', 43, on man/woman as 'only one couple in a common matrix' of polarities, where 'transformations between sets of dichotomies are performed all the time.'

moving/curved/darkness/evil. The anthropologist in this case was Aristotle, whose report that the Pythagorean dualisms were arrranged 'in two columns of cognates' guaranteed their transmission to every subsequent scholastic discussion of women. With right/left and light/dark, the gender polarity was generally important in ancient Greek thought, and correlations between women and the negative poles of such dualisms were common. Aristotle's own treatment of gender is said by Maclean to illustrate his 'general tendency to produce dualities in which one element is superior and the other inferior'. For Aristotle sexual difference was a matter of contrariety, based on the opposite of privation. From him too the Renaissance inherited further parallels between the female and the passive, material, deprived, potential, imperfect, and incomplete—all of them negative poles of hierarchical oppositions.[63]

In this respect, it is important that the hardening of polar conceptions of gender that has been found among medieval intellectuals between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries should also have reflected Aristotle's views, as well as Aquinas's endorsement of them. Susan Stuard argues that the systematic assigning of contrary qualities by sex had not been popular in the early Middle Ages, when likeness, rather than difference, was felt to link men and women. In the new thinking, traits tended to be first assigned to men, then their opposites to women. As in the Pythagorean 'columns', the process of categorization itself became the dominant influence on views about women: 'Europeans began to speak and think of "woman" as a category rather than of women as they knew them', with predictable consequences for their social position and moral reputation.[64] It was in this manner that men were endowed with a higher, and women with a lower form of soul—the first, a superior *mens* (or *spiritus),* suggesting rationality, the second, with long-term implications for misogyny and witchcraft beliefs, an inferior *anima* (or *senstts),* connoting sensuality.[65]

The polar classification of gender was not given columnar exposition in the early modern centuries (except, that is, in commentaries on the Pythagorean version in

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[41] Maclean, *Renaissance Notion of Woman,* 2-3,8,37-8; cf. Maryanne Cline Horowitz, 'Aristotle and Woman', *J. Hist. Biology,* 9 (1976), 183-213; Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy,* 16,48-65,94—102; *id.,Science, Folklore and Ideology: Studies in the Life Sciences in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1983), 100-1, where Aristotle is said to have looked not for observable differences between men and women but for 'a *simple* correlation between a series of pairs of opposites', being 'more influenced, in these generalisations, by his expectation that there will be such correlations than by any direct empirical evidence' (see also 33-5). For comparisons with the non-hierarchical polarities of Hippocratic physiology, see Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1993), 15-26.

[44] Susan Stuard, 'The Domination of Gender: Women's Fortunes in the High Middle Ages', in Rcnatc Bridenthal, Claudia Koonz, and Susan Stuard (eds.), *Becoming Visible: Women in European Society,* 2nd edn. (Boston, 1987), 153-72, quotation at 166 (this essay is not in the lstedn.of/tewnm# *Visible);* cf. Dclumeau, *La Peur,* 312-20.

[6$] Angela M. Lucas, *Women in the Middle Ages: Religion, Marriage and Letters* (Brighton, 1983), 3-58, esp. 4. For opposition in medieval views of women, see also Joan M. Ferrante, *Woman as Image in Medieval Literature from the Twelfth Century to Dante* (London, 1975), 1-43; Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference,* 201-26, and see 198 on the strings of association right/warm/male and left/cool/female in medieval views of sex difference: 'Certainly we are dealing with a consistent scientific theory that takes heat to be a defining principle and an instrument in the creation of maleness, but we are also in the presence of a general hierarchy of value, in which the better alternatives are ranged against the worse.'

Aristotle's *Metaphysics).*[6''] But it is usual to find male/female, and its derivative husband/ wife, among the contraries that were thought to compose the world by the cosmologists and philosophers of the time. In this respect the Neoplatonic notion of creation and world order as a union and co-operation of male and female forces had a major influence.[67] In one account of marriage, Guillaume de La Perrière interpreted an ancient custom of bride and groom exchanging gifts of fire and water as an emblem of the diametric contrariety between the sexes. Like the Neoplatonists, but also like one of Hertz's 'primitives', he thought that everywhere in the creation—in the stars and planets and in minerals, as well as in animate things—there were male and female poles, and that in the causation of all phenomena, every 'male' active was 'married' to every 'female' passive.[68] Among the contrarieties that sustained the world for Pontus de Tyard were the male and the female, conjoining nevertheless in the creation of offspring. Among the contrarieties that signalled its decline and dissolution for Bishop Goodman were the same male and female, no longer equipoised in influence but with the female dominant.[69] Husbands and wives appeared, too, in those lists of contraries that made up the cosmologies of Le Roy and La Primaudaye. In England, it has been said, the gender-system of the Elizabethans 'combined principles of hierarchy and reciprocity, distinguishing male and female as superior and inferior, and interrelating them as complementary'.[70]

What Maclean has shown, in particular, is how much of the scholastic, and even pre-scholastic, framework of gender opposition remained intact in the individual disciplines that made up late Renaissance scholarship throughout Europe. In theology, he finds that sex continued to be 'a polarity rather than something which admits ranges of possibilities to both man and woman which may overlap'. In medicine, anatomy, and physiology, the Pythagorean and Aristotelian classifications held fast, despite empirical challenges, to cast women as privative opposites and associate them pre-eminently with uncleanness and unnaturalness. In ethics, politics, and law, and in social writings generally, the values and virtues allotted to women were, again, privatives or relatives of those allotted to men. 'Much discussion about women', he concludes:

> is governed or underlaid by a theory of opposites and of difference.... Underlying [the] Aristotelian taxonomy of opposition are Pythagorean dualities, which link, without explanation, woman with imperfection, left, dark, evil and so on. These emerge most obviously in medicine, but are implied in theology and ethics also. Although they are nowhere explicitly

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“ For an example from a writer on witchcraft, see Bartolommeo Spina, S. *Thomae Aquinalis praeclarissima commentariamduodecimhbrosmetaphysicorum/lristotelis. Cum ...F. BartholomaeiSpinae... in eadem commentaria, acutissime locorum quorundam dejensiones* (Venice, 1562), cols. 44-6

[67] Ferrante, *Woman as Image,* 2,40-2.

« La Perriere, *Mirrour of politic,* sigs. Viv~, Zi'-Zii'; thus, the female poles include Venus/ moon/earth/substance/passtve/silver.

M Tyard, *Deux Discours de la nature du monde,* fo. 81'; Goodman, *Fall of man,* 23.

[70] Louis Adrian Montrose, 'The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text', in Patricia Parker and David Quint (cds.), *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts* (Baltimore, 1986), 308.

defended, they may nonethless be the most accurate indicator in anthropological terms of the status of woman in Renaissance society and culture.[71]

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Writers specifically on women and women's issues transacted their exchanges in the linguistic structures of contrariety, like traders dealing in a common currency. It did not matter whether they were misogynists or philogynists. Ercole Tasso, whose treatise on marriage circulated throughout Europe in translation, dissuaded would-be husbands on the grounds that men should avoid, not seek, their opposites: 'Man, being the Act and Forme... doth follow, and take what is good: and so by this reason, the woman is made of that part that is worst.' If man was *ens,* then woman was *non-ens,* 'being nothing, or a thing without substance', and 'not framed for any other respect or use, then for a Receptacle of some of our Excrementall humors'. If marriage nevertheless occurred, a man should expect only domestic chaos, for his wife would, not casually but systematically, interpret everything he said and did in a way that was opposite to what he intended.[72]

Le Champion des dames, written in the 1440s by the Lausanne cleric Martin Le Franc and republished in 1530 on the eve of the first phase of the *querelle des femmes,* included the statement (by the anti-feminist 'Malebouche') that women were created as the contraries of men so that the latter's worth might be better appreciated:

On la fit, car quant ung contraire
Est a son contraire oppose
On peult mieulx la valeur retraire
De cil qui est iuxte pose
Or est il trestout suppose
Que femme est noire et Phommc blanc
Pourcc appert mieulx compose
Vers clle que ne vault ung blanc.[73]

Gratien Du Pont, one of France's most bitter misogynists, wrote that God had divided up the sexes just as he had the whole world into polar opposites—fair and foul, high and low, rich and poor, and so on. One of his many 'ballades' against women has the refrain: 'Des hommes est: le vray contraire | femme' (i. e. 'femme est le vray contraire des hommes'). Elsewhere he asks: 'Quest ce du monde? que plus a l'homme nuyst | Plus luy est contraire : ct de jour et de nuyct | Que plus le faict: repputer estre infame? | Par mon adviz : je diz que cest la femme.' In his huge anti-woman tract, as in *La Guerre des tnasles contre les femelles* by the Sieur de Cholières, a main theme is the way women do everything by contraries.[74]

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[71] Maclean, *Renaissance Notion of Woman,* 87-8,27, and *passim;* I have given only the barest summary of findings which are, nevertheless, crucial to the argument attempted here. Cf. Maclean, *Woman Triumphant,* 1—24.

[72] Ercole Tasso and Torquato Tasso, *Of 'manage and miring,* trans. R. T. (London, 1599), sigs. C3$^{r'}$\ D3'-D4'.

[71] Martin Le Franc, *Le Champion des dames* (3 vols.; Paris, 1530), i. fo. Ixxxvii' (and see also iii. fos. ccxci-ccxciiii^{r}): 'She was made because when a contrary is opposed to its contrary one can better grasp the value of what is juxtaposed; and everyone assumes that woman is black and man is white, because he appears better compared to her than white would be worth alone.'

In England, one of the most notorious Jacobean woman-haters, Joseph S wetnam, declared that woman was ‘nothing else but a contrary unto man.’ His reasoning took the usual form; ‘because in all things there is a contrary which sheweth the difference betwixt the good and the bad, even so both of men and women there are contrary sorts of behaviour.’[75] According to Henry Smith, the ‘silver-tongued’ virtuoso of Elizabethan preaching, ‘the Philosophers coulde not tell how to define a Wife, but called her *The contrarie to a Husband,* as though nothing were so crosse and contraric to a man, as a Wife.’ Contrariety here (as for Tasso, Du Pont, and Cholières) evidently meant something like hostility and contention, as well as a logical relation; the philosophers’ uncertainty stemmed, added Smith, from the tendency of wives ‘to overthwart, and upbraide, and sue the preheminence of their Husbands.’ But it is not clear that this was a difference in meaning that mattered to men in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. From contrary' sexes, contrary kinds of behaviour were expected; and marriages were places where these might clash.[76] In any case, the pure logic in the argument could still draw feminist responses. The pseudonymous ‘Constantia Munda’ accused Swetnam of picking up casual antitheses (like warrior/lover) and then stretching them to account for gender difference itself.[77]

There are other recurring linguistic and conceptual features of the arguments about women that confirm their deep reliance on binary classification. One of them is a dependence on antithesis as a rhetorical figure—an aspect of what most commentators have seen as the highly stylized and artificial character of the debate.[78] In medieval letters, the nature of women was a popular theme for rhetorical exercises, and this seems true of the following age as well. Misogynistic writing, in particular, was constantly polarized between male virtues and female vices, resulting in litanies of opposites and a prose of balanced ‘euphuistic’ statements for men and against

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” Gratien Du Pont, Sieur de Drusac, *Les Controversses des sexes masculin et femenin* (Toulouse, 1534), fos. xiii"’, lxxvii"” (‘Woman is the true contrary of men.’), cxxii' (‘What is there in the world that has been more hurtful and is more contrary to man, and what is there that, night and day, brings him more ill-repute? In my view, I say, this is woman.’); Sieur de Cholieres, *La Guerre des tnasles contre les femelles* (Paris, 1588), fo. 7.

” Thomas Tel-troth [pseud, of Joseph Swetnam], *The alignment oflewde, idle.froward, and uncon-itantwomcn* (London, 1615), 33,50.

[76] Henry Smith,//*preparative to manage* (London, 1591), 82 (author’s italics).

[77] [Constantia Munda], *The worming of a mad dogge: or, a soppefor Cerberus, the Jaylor of Hell. No confutation but a sharpe redargution ofthe bay ter ofwomen* (1617), in Henderson and McManus (eds.), *Half Humankind,* 262; Simon Shepherd, *Amazons and Warrior Women: Varieties of Feminism in Seventeenth-Century Drama* (Brighton, 1981), 205-6; id. (ed.), *The Women's Sharp Revenge: Five Women's Pamphlets from the Renaissance* (New York, 1985), 14.

’• In what follows I am indebted, in particular, to Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance.* For the rhetorical aspects of the literature in France, see Maclean, *Woman Triumphant,* pp viii 62-3 and *passim;* Pierre Darmon, *Mylhologte de la femme dans I’Ancienne France fxi'r-xtx' sieelei* (P-irk 1983) 57-9; Lazard, *Images litteraires de la femme,* 11, 15,239, Auce Guillerm *et al.* (eds.), *Le Miroir desfemme's* (Lille, 1983), pt. 1, 193-4. For England, see also Henderson and McManus, *Half Humankind* 39-42; Rogers, *Troublesome Helpmate,* 100-34; Francis Lee Utley, *The Crooked Rib* (Columbus, Oh., 194-4), 3-90.

women.[79] Just as plays dealing with women benefited from the elements of anti-masque in stage misogyny, so books about them juxtaposed positive and negative images and examples in deliberate opposition, as if arguing *a contrariis.*™ This is the case with the tracts by Jean de Marconville, Niclaus Schmidt^and Domenico Bruni, and, in England, Bamabe Rich, Thomas Heywood, and John Taylor. Rich, Heywood, and Trousset argued by contraries quite explicity, appealing also to the principle of *concordia discors.* They took the view that, since, as Rich put it, 'there is no contrarie without his contrary', any discussion of women should divide them into the virtuous and the vicious—just like day and night, light and dark, soul and body, heaven and hell.[81] The 'good' and the 'bad' woman also became prose 'characters', appearing in the Jacobean collections modelled on Theophrastus, as well as the subjects of dialogues conducted on a pro- and contra- basis.[82] Thus early modern culture seems to have endorsed and enriched the traditional acknowledgment of only two main stereotypes of female behaviour—signified by the bipolar figures of Mary and Eve and captured memorably in William Monter's phrase 'pedestal and stake'.[83] As several witchcraft writers too remarked, women were either exceptional in virtue or exceptional in vice.[84] According to one analysis, Tudor and early Stuart authors relied mainly on three particular versions of this basic taxonomy; chaste woman/seductress, nurturing woman/shrew, and pious woman/undutiful sinner.[85]

When complete defences of women or of marriage were attempted, they were still often placed alongside the corresponding attacks, in conformity to the conceptual relationship between the two but also the rhetorical skill of arguing *in utramque*

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[*] See, for example, Swctnam, *Araignment oflewde ... women, passim;* Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance,* 81-7.

[w] Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance,* 275-99, esp. 290; cf. Belsey, *Subject of Tragedy,* 165.

[11] Bamabe Rich, *The excellency of good women* (London, 1613), 5, see also 30-2 (= 31-3); Thomas Heywood, *Gunaikeion: or, nine bookes of various history concerninge women* (London, 1624), sig. A3*, 163; [Alexis Trousset], *Alphabet de Timperfection et malice des femmes* (Paris, 1617), 332; cf. Marconville, *Bonte et mauvaistie des femmes,* sig. A3'"*, fo. 45'; Niclaus Schmidt, *Von den zehen Teufeln oder Lastem, damit die bösen unartigen Weiber besessen sind, Auch von zehen Tiigenden, damit die frommen unnd verniinffiigen Weiber gezieret unndbegabet sind, in Reimweisgestelt* (n.p. [Leipzig], 1557); Domenico Bruni, *Opera ... intitolata difese delle donne* (Florence, 1552), fo. 6; John Taylor, *A juniper lecture. With the description of all sorts of women, good, and bad: From the modest to the maddest, from the most civil to the scold rampant, their praise and dispraise compendiously related,* 2nd cdn. (London, 1639).

[12] Jacques Tahureau, *Les Dialogues* (Paris, 1565), 11-26; Cholieres, *La Guerre des masles contre les femelies, passim.*

[M] Evelyn S. Newlyn, 'Between the Pit and the Pedestal: Images of Eve and Mary in Medieval Cornish Drama', in Edclgard E. DuBruck (cd.), *New Images ofMedieval Women: Essays Toward a Cultural Anthropology* (Lampeter, 1989), 121-5, cf. DuBruck's introduction, 3-10; E. William Monter, 'The Pedestal and the Stake: Courtly Love and Witchcraft', in R. Bridenthal and C. Koonz (eds.), *Becoming Visible: Women in European History* (Boston, 1977), 119-36; Monica Blocker, 'Frauenzaubcr—Zauberfrauen', *Zeitschrift fiir schweizerische Kirchengeschichte,* 76 (1982), 10-11.

[M] [Kramer and Sprenger], *Malleus maleficarum,* 112-16; Sebastien Michaelis, *Pneumology, or discourse of spirits,* trans. W.B. and published with the author's *Admirable historic* (London, 1613), with separate pagination, 77; Serclier, *L'Antidemon historial,* 534-8; Roberts, *Treatise of witchcraft,* 42-3.

[15] Henderson and McManus, *Half Humankind,* 99-130, esp. 99-100; cf. Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance,* 211-13.

partem and in quodlibetical or epideictic disputation. Ercole Tasso’s negative treatise was printed with a rebuttal by his brother Torquato; Edward Gosynhill wrote his *The prayse ofall women, called mulierum pean* as the ‘contrary’ of his *The schole house of women,* without apparently changing his mind; in an early issue of 1617, Troussct’s *Alphabet* appeared bound with a *Defense des femmes,* a coupling probably inspired by the printer.[86] Verses violently denigrating the evil woman and then lauding her virtuous counterpart in the same extreme terms were published back-to-back by another Tudor writer, C. Pyrrye.[87] As the title of his *The good and the badde* suggests, Nicholas Breton divided all social behaviour into contraries, including that of women and wives, while the (animal) protagonists for and against women in Robert Vaughan’s *A dyalogue defensyve for women* swap little more than antitheses.[88] Linda Woodbridge has spoken of the ritualistic and ‘liturgical’ elements in these literary exchanges. One is often made to feel that views about women could be reduced to, and were no more serious than, a play of language; in France, Du Pont composed a set of verses that yielded negative or positive judgements about women according to how much of each line was read and in what direction.[89]

The presentation of positive images of women, in whatever form, seems to contradict the straightfoward gender polarity with its usual weighting. But quite apart from the misogynist retort that the best woman was always worse than the worst man, praiseworthy virtues in women were often either masculine in origin (like learning[90]) or, more usually, the contraries of masculine ones (like obedience). Such images remained tied, therefore, to precisely the logic that normally subordinated women as a whole to men by allotting them negative or inferior traits. In this way, the defences of women offered during the Tudor and Stuart controversy and in seventeenth-century France actually complemented the attacks, reinforcing the same ideals of feminine behaviour but in positive rather than negative stereotypes.” Besides, praises of women or declarations of their superiority were often undercut by

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“ Le Sieur Vigoureux, *La defense des femmes, contre 1‘alphabet de tear pretendue malice et imperfection* (Paris, 1617), which reverses the ‘female’ vices, including those associated with witchcraft (113-19), by applying them to men.

n *C.* Pyrrye, *The praise and dispraise of women* (London, n.d. [1569?]).

“ Breton, *The good and the badde,* 27-8 (virgin/wanton woman), 28-30 (quiet woman/unquict woman); Robert Vaughan[?], *A dyalogue defensyve for women, agaynst malycyous detractoures* (London, 1542); this may have been by R. Burdct. The same pattern is evident *in A watchword for wilful! women. An excellent pithie dialogue betweene two sisters, of contrary dispositions: the one a vertuous matrone: fearing God: the other a wilfull huswife: of disordered behavioure* (London, 1581).

B Du Pont, *Controverses des sexes,* fos. cxxvii'-cxxviii’. For a late medieval parallel, see Power, *Medieval Women,* 29-30 (verses praising women but concluding with the line *Cuius contrarium verum est).* On the elements of literary play in the French texts, see Guillcrm *et al.* (eds.), *Miroir des femmes,* i. 193-4.

w Margaret L. King, ‘Book-Lined Cells: Women and Humanists in the Early Renaissance’, in Patricia H. Labalme (cd.), *Beyond their Sex: Learned Women ofthe European Past* (London, 1980), 75-80. Many typical further examples in Lucretia Marinella, *Le nobilta et eccellenze delle donne: et idijfetti, e mancamenti degli huomini* (Venice, 1600), fos. 13'-40’; Marinella turns the charge of demonism back against men in their capacities as ‘incantatori, magi, e indovini’ (fos. 81'-83’).

” Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance,* 133—4, see also 3, 18, 77; Pierre Ronzeaud, ‘U Femme au pouvoir ou le monde *i* 1’envers’, XW *Siecle,* 108 (1975), 9-33; cf. Maclean, *Woman Triumphant,* 67-8; Delumeau, *La Peur,* 340.

facetiousness, or, more revealing still, classed as forms of rhetorical paradox. According to Rosalie Colie the nature of women was 'one of the great subjects of Renaissance paradox'.[92] In this context, women were worthier than men in the same way that poverty was better than riches, or tyranny better than good rulership, or folly better than wisdom—that is to say, in the word-play of those who composed formal defences for untenable propositions. Like all forms of inversion, arguments for the unarguable could, in sophisticated hands, cast doubt on conventional preferences and expose their artificiality. Agrippa's widely known oration in favour of women pointed up, it has been said, 'the untenable nature of one extreme position by demonstrating the feasibility of arguing its opposite'.[93] On the other hand, blatant inversions of this kind could also be used as a rhetorical shock tactic to reinforce the normal weightings, and in the less elevated genre of the paradox-collection this looks like its main function. Ortensio Landi's hugely popular *Paradossi* (1543), for example, was introduced to English readers as a book of'contrary' opinions, 'to the end, that by such discourse as is helde in them, opposed truth might appeare more cleare and apparent'.[94] It was in this spirit that John Donne argued that women ought to paint, and his fellow poet Robert Heath that they ought to preach.[95] An entire work apologizing for women by Alexandre de Pontaymeri was classed as a rhetorical paradox, and, thus, as an exercise in contrariety, when it too appeared in English in 1599.[96] But in a less rhetorically formal sense, arguments for female virtue and strength were invariably paradoxical, for they were in deliberate antithesis to prevailing notions of female vice and weakness. This was the case with the figure of the *femme forte* in seventeenth-century French literature.[97]

Even texts that spoke directly and without contrivance on behalf of women, or were outrightly 'feminist', were, in the end, constrained by the same discursive habits. Like the eponymous 'Jane Anger' they inverted the usual attributions of virtues and vices but retained the underlying commitment to polarity: ‘We are contrary to men’, she wrote in 1589, ‘because they are contrary to that which is good.”[8] Attempts at superiority or parity could also deconstruct themselves. In 1580, Juan de Espinosa admitted (with Aristotle and Galen) that women originated in the seed from the left testicle but argued that they were still nobler than men, since the left side of the body also included the heart. Likewise, in 1616, Daniel Tuvil insisted that just as the left hand could, with training, be put to as good use as the right, so women might prove as crucial as men in domestic and public affairs. What these men did not appear to see was that their claims rested on precisely the symbolic association (and the system of associations of which it was a part) that normally elevated one sex and depressed the other.[99] It has been suggested that it was, in fact, impossible for a sixteenth-century intellectual to think about gender other than in terms of the traditional categories of superiority and inferiority, and that the feminist writers of seventeenth-century France were always liable to inconsistency in wanting both to end the polarizing of passions and moral attributes ‘into predominantly male and predominantly female categories’ while, at the same time, exploiting the reversal of these same categories as a rhetorical strategy.[100] There was often, then, nothing to distinguish the mental traits of the philogynist from those of the misogynist; both shared a ‘manichaean representation of the sexes’.[101] The arguments for women’s superiority, or, at least, amelioration, were only versions of the arguments for men’s, with the consequence that, even in contestation, they endorsed the very classification system at which they were ostensibly directed: ‘It is therefore clear’, we arc told, ‘that the discourse of women relied on a system of values entirely consistent with the one imposed at the time by the dominant ideology, which was built on the hierarchical opposition of “high” and “low”, and of the mind over the body.’[102] One eventual contributor to the debate about women who did think herself into a different categorial framework—into parity rather than polarity—was Marie de Gournay. ‘Most of those’, she wrote in 1622,

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[92] Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica*, 53, see also 102-3.

” Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance*, 42, sec also 323-7 on the general elements of paradox in the debate on women and in Renaissance literary culture.

M [Ortensio Landi], *The defence of contraries,* trans. A[nthony] M[unday] (London, 1593), sig. A4^{r} (also issued in 1602 by Thomas Lodge as *Paradoxes against common opinion).* The French trans, is more explicit on this point: 'Tout ainsi, Lccteur, que les choses contraircs raportccs Tune a l'autre, donnent meilleure congnoissance de leur evidence et vertu: aussi la verite d'un propos sc trouve beaucoup plus clere, quand les raisons contraircs luy sont de bien pres approchces'; *Paradoxe qu *ilvaut mieux estrepauvre que riche,* trans. Charles Esticnne (Caen, 1554), 'Au lccteur'. Commentary and bibliography in Brian Vickers, ' "King Lear" and Renaissance Paradoxes', *Modem Language Rev.* 63 (1968), 305-14; Colic, *Paradoxia Epidemica,* 461-3.

[95] John Donne,'Tuiwn/t#.* *or certaine paradoxes, andproblemes* (London, 1633), sigs. B2—B3, see also A3^{r}-BP, C3'-C4'; (R)obert [HJeath, *Paradoxical assertions and philosophical problems* (London, 1659), 1-7.

[94] Alexandre de Pontaymeri, *Paradoxe apologique, ou il est fidellement demonstre que la femme est beaucoup plusparfaitte que I'homme en toute action de vertu* (1594), trans. A. Munday[?], in Anthony Gibson, *A womans woorth, defended against all the men in the world* (London, 1599), sigs. A4'—A5^{r}. On the paradox-type in French writings on women, see Marc Angenot, *Les Champtons des femmes: Examen du dtscourssur la superiority desfemmes, 1400-1800* (Montreal, 1977), 152-3.

[97] Maclean, *Woman Triumphant,* pp. viii, 6,38,73-4,78,86-7,242; cf. Maclean, *Renaissance Notion of Woman,* 21-2,26-7.

> who take up the cause of women, against this arrogant priority claimed by men, repay them in the same coin, transferring the priority to themselves. I who shun all extremes am content to make them equal to men, nature being, in this regard, as much opposed to superiority as to inferiority.[10]’

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” Jane Anger *[pseud.], Jane Anger her protection for women* (1589), in Henderson and McManus, *Half Humankind,* 178. For other examples, see Honorat de Menier, *La Perfection desfemmes. Avec rimperfection deceuxquilesmesprisent(Paris, \(>25),passim.*

” Paul Julian Smith, *The Body Hispanic: Gender and Sexuality in Spanish and Spanish American Literature (Oxford,* 1989), 17-18; Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance,* 106-10.

·m *For* the second point, sec Maclean, *Woman Triumphant,* 2S0-1; cf. Hilda L. Smith, *Reason's Disciples: Seventeenth-Century English Feminists* (London, 1982), pp. xiii-xiv and *passim.*

[101] Darmon, *Mylhologie de la femme,* 54-5; cf. Lazard, *Images litteraires de la femme,* 12; Angenot, *Champions des femmes,* 163, who speaks of a ‘systeme scalairc’.

[101] Guillerm *et al.* (eds.), *Miroir des femmes,* pt. 2,209; other examples given here of hierarchical oppositions (‘structures antithetiques’) in late 16th-c. writings by women are: travail matcriel/travail cerebral, silence/raison, animalite/humanite, nature/culture. Cf. Maclean, *Woman Triumphant,* p. viii, who describes 17th-c. feminism as ‘a reassessment in woman’s favour of the relative capacities of the sexes’.

[103] Marie de Gournay, *Egalite des hommes et des femmes* (1622), repr. in Mario Schiff (ed.), *La Fillt*

Although the fact that this literary game-playing may have had little to do with the lived experiences of real men and women has been seen as a problem, its very artificiality also has some precious advantages. In fact, representations of gender did affect how sexual sameness and difference were experienced, underpinning the very situations from which our knowledge of past life-worlds is often derived.[104] But precisely because rhetoric's deviations exaggerate what is persuasive in ordinary language, they can be vital pointers to the normative assumptions of a particular speech community. In this instance, they show that gender was evidently another of the components of the dualism to which contemporary male intellectuals were habituated. Behind, therefore, the apparent naturalness with which writers on demonology linked witchcraft with women—half-hidden by their easy commonplaces and obvious clichés—lay the stricter demands of a collective representational scheme. 'Male' and 'female' meant what they did not because of mere difference, but because they were thought of as asymmetrical polar opposites and were linked by analogy to other similar opposites in the same symbolic system. In this system, a formal equivalence, or homology, obtained between the dual classification of gender and a cluster of other dual classifications concerning religion, morality, the social order, and individual behaviour. Together, the two formal relationships of opposition within single pairs of opposites, and analogical transformation and interchangeability between different pairs of opposed categories, ensured that witchcraft authors had no choice but to associate—or, in Geoffrey Lloyd's terms, 'correlate'—the category female with other negative categories, thus deriving the properties of femininity from the classification system itself, not the other way round. The world of *Malleus maleficarum,* writes Sophie Houdard, 'is a world cut violently into two, divided between men, "superior to women", thanks to "this natural strength of reason", and preserved from being witches by their sex, the sex chosen by Christ, and women, tied by nature to be ruled by the flesh and by pollution.' Here, the feminine was both necessary to a representational system and, at the same time, a constant threat to its symbolic organization. 'It is really a question of a bipolar world—where the feminine is opposite to the masculine in the manner of an isomorphism—where the woman (and, even more so, the witch) is never perceived as *different* to the man, but as completely mww.'[105]

Hence the absence of signs of work on the surface of witchcraft texts—and, indeed, an explanation for the lack of conformity between demonological theory and the actual sexual breakdown in those witchcraft prosecutions where men made up a significant minority or even a substantial portion of those accused.[106] The theorists

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d'alliance de Montaigne Marie de Goumay (Paris, 1910), 61; cf. William Austin, *Haec homo, wherein the excellency of the creation of women is described,*3rd cdn. (London, 1639), 5 ('In the sexe, is all the difference; which is but onely in the body*); Tasso and Tasso, *Of mariage and wiving,* sig. K2^{r} ('the vertue of the Man and of the Woman, was all one thing, and the verie same').

[104] For a defence of this point, and of a general approach to the history of women that stresses representations of women, sec Maryanne Cline Horowitz, 'The Woman Question in Renaissance Texts', *Hist. European Ideas,* 8 (1987), 587-95.

[105] Houdard, *Sciences du Diable,* 42-7, quotations at 43 (author's emphasis).

[104] Briggs,* Women as Victims?*, *passim.*

might have said, as Ercole Tasso did say, that 'Woman, and Badde, shalle be... Sj,,,. *ovinias.*'[107] For it was literally unthinkable, at this level, that witches should be male. They also reasoned in the way he did when he derived the religious inferiority of women from the Pauline binary code for times of preaching and prayer, men = bare headed/w'omen = covered headed, and the two givens (1) 'that men are the Images and glorie of God', and (2) 'that woman ... is forbid to unshadowe and unbare her head'; and in the way Torquato Tasso reasoned when he gave dominant virtues to each sex and then derived its dominant vice from the antithesis of its dominant virtue and its most excusable vice from the antithesis of the dominant virtue of the other sex.'[108] Early modern demonology was constrained, indeed, by the same kind of binary and analogical thinking that sustained three of the most influential and long-lasting doctrines of pre-modern medicine, all of them at variance with later biological findings: that the female sex of a foetus was linked to the left side of the womb, that the shape of the female genitals was the exact reverse of the male, and that females were dominated by the wet and cold humours and males by the dry and hot.[109]

But if all witches were (supposedly) women, all women were not witches—only the highly anomalous ones. Marie de Gournay's remarks about the representation of gender (and Sophie Houdard's about 'inversion by negation', in *Malleus maleficarum)* remind us again that inversion was not extraneous to the classification system but its only modification. Complementarity, we recall, was the benign aspect of asymmetrical opposition in early modern Europe; inversion the malign. The first constituted order, the second disorder. Women complemented men in their inferiority and defined them by their difference. Like other negative items in the moral and social world, they were normally encompassed by their positive opposites. In this condition they were needed, like evil itself, to maintain a state of *concordia discors* in the tirelessly repeated formula, they were 'necessary evils'. And to describe that condition was to describe the 'good' woman—pious, patient, silent, acting in conformity to male standards of female sexuality, domesticity, and religiosity, and, above all (as encompassment essentially demands), obedient.

Represented in this way, women could only transgress by inversion; the claim of gender superiority was itself a theme from the *tnundus inversus.*[110] All the main images of the 'evil' woman in early modern Europe derived from her supposed aim to overturn the natural order of things and end up on top. Women who challenged patriarchal rule or were wilful and domineering (‘shrews’, ‘Amazons’);[111] women who usurped male control of language (‘scolds’, ‘gossips’, women preachers);[112] women who sought sexual superiority or behaved like men (‘whores’, seductresses, viragos)—these were the stereotypes of disorderly and criminal females made possible by the prevailing classification of gender. According to one Englishman, the shrew was ‘a very Crab, if shee affect any pleasures, they must be backward’.[113] For queens to rule instead of kings was, in John Knox’s eyes, ‘to invert the ordre, which God hath established’; according to Thomas Dekker it was like the ‘preposterous’ inversion of the feet over the head when wives dominated husbands.[114] ‘I demand’, wrote Francis Bacon of the Amazons, ‘is not such a preposterous government (against the first order of nature, for women to rule over men) in itself void, and to be suppressed?’[115] Such threats to male dominance were symbolized by Spenser’s Amazon queen, Radigund, who defeated Artegall and forced him to dress in woman’s clothing; by the wives who exchanged roles with their husbands and went off to war in the stock depictions of the ‘world turned upside down’; and by the domineering women who, in many illustrations of the *imperiosus muliermd* of Aristotle and Phyllis, forced their men onto all-fours, put bridles in their mouths, and rode on their backs, beating them the while with whips.[116] Inversion by women was not, of course, always a negative experience; the usual ambiguity made room for new ways of conceiving of gender relations and even modes of resistance to the traditional forms they took.[117] French feminism in the age of Louis XIII was able momentarily, according to Maclean, to mix opposites and reverse polarities with sufficient baroque energy to negate and transcend, as well as to uphold them.[118] Special categories of women-on-top, like

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[107] Tasso and Tasso, *Of mariage and wiving,* sig. 3'.

[108] Ibid., sigs. C4'-Dl^{r}; Torquato Tasso, *Discorso della virtu feminile e donnesca* (1582), cited by Maclean, *Renaissance Notion of Woman,* 62.

[109] For examples of left/right explanations of sex difference, see Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference,* 33, 35, 41, 55, 62-3, 93, 131, 197-8, 201-2, 254. On the reversed or differential homologies of genital shapes, see the citations and stimulating commentary by Stephen Grecnblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Elizabethan England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1988), 79-86, together with the brilliant study by Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (London, 1990), esp. 25-113. On the humerology of the sexes, see the typical passages from Ambroisc Parc and Laurent Joubert cited in Delumeau, *La Peur,* 328-9.

[110] Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance,2\fr,* Angcnot, *Champions des femmes,* 163,148-9; Delumeau, *La Peur,* 342-3; Grant, 'World Upside-Down*, in Jones (ed.), *Studies in Spanish Literature,* 113-18.

[1.1] Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance,* 190—219; C. T. Wright, ‘The Amazons in Elizabethan Literature’, *Stud. Philology,* 37 (1940), 433-56; Shepherd, *Amazons and Warrior Women,* 13-17; Louis Adrian Montrose, ‘ “Shaping Fantasies”: Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture’, *Representations, 2* (1983), 61-94; Margaret L. King, *Women of the Renaissance* (London, 1991), 188-93.

[1.2] Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance,* 207-13; Belscy, *Subject of Tragedy,* 178-91; David Underdown, ‘The Taming of the Scold: The Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England*, in Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (cds.), *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1985), 116-36; Sharpe, ‘Women and Witchcraft’, 186, on the power of violent speech by females.

[11] ’ Richard Brathwait, *Essaies upon the five senses* (London, 1620), 139.

[1,4] [John Knox], *The first blast of the trumpet against the monstruous regiment of women* (n.p. [Geneva], 1558), fo. 34' and *passim’,* Dekker cited by Rogers, *Troublesome Helpmate,* 104—5. Cf. Stc [...] B., *Counsel to the husband: To the wife instruction* (London, 1608), 71, who compares the effects of the rule of wives to the crucifixion of St Peter, ‘with his hcelcs upward’.

[„s] Bacon, *Works,* vii. 33.

[1,4] Edmund Spenser, *The faerie queene,* in *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser,* ed. *J. C.* Smith (3 vols.; Oxford, 1909), iii. 213 (v. v. 20); *Die Verkehrte Welt,* 67,68,72; *Ethnographies mundipars tertia, imperiosus mulier. Das ist das Regierjuchtige Weib* (Magdeburg, 1611), title-page; *The deceyte of women (c.* 1560), title-page, reproduced in Hull, *Chaste, Silent, and Obedient,* 109.

[1,7] The classic study of these aspects of‘women on top’ and of the theme in general is Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modem France,* 124-51.

[1,1] Maclean, *Woman Triumphant,* 233-65, esp. 264-5.

female rulers and female saints, could also be explained away by special exemptions.[119] On the whole, however, what was feared and condemned in transgressive women was simply the opposite of what was eulogized in their submissive sisters—the latter's willingness to accept things the 'right' way up.

Witchcraft took its place alongside these other disorders, then, as another obvious example of feminine deviance—a deviance that could only take inversionary forms.[120] All of them were old motifs in the history of women but all achieved greater prominence and dispersion in the age of the witch trials. Shrews, scolds, viragos, and the rest were all demonic, of course.[121] They 'will neither say nor doo any thing', said Ercole Tasso of the first, 'but all by contraries, such and so vile is their perverse and Diabolicall nature'.[122] This made shrew-taming an analogue of counter-witchcraft; in England it was, indeed, habitual to use the word 'charm' when referring to it.[121] But in witchcraft itself, inversion reached its highest point of sophistication; witches were women-on-top *par excellence.* This is why one of them, Judith Phillips, was depicted as riding on the back of the man she had allegedly defrauded by magic.[12'] According to one German authority, their very name *(Hexeti)* was derived from the Amazons; according to another, they treated the devil as their husband.[123] They allegedly committed all the transgressions that women might individually commit—whether political, linguistic, or sexual—and others besides, all on a collective and organized basis. They set themselves up ostensibly in positions of command and subverted the institutions of God's order; their powers to effect evil depended fundamentally on the manipulation of speech; and their rites and ceremonies issued in, and were designed to satisfy, the foulest perversions. Witchcraft was overthwartness made systematic, unruliness and overturning taken to ritualistic lengths. At a demonological level, therefore, witches were female because the representational system governing them required for its coherence a general correlation between such primary oppositions as good/evil, order/disorder, soul/body, and male/female; they were females who, by behaviour inspired by the master of inversion, the devil, inverted the polarized attributes accorded to the genders in later medieval and early modern learned culture; and of these subversives, they were thought to be the most extreme and the most dangerous.

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[119] On attitudes to gynaccocracy, see Constance Jordan, 'Woman's Rule in Sixteenth-Century British Political Thought*, *Renaissance Quart.* 40 (1987), 421-51.

[120] There is a discussion of accusations of magic and sorcery against women in the context of the supposed feminine propensity for anti-patriarchal disorder in Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modem Seville* (Princeton, 1990), 27-32. For evidence from Protestant cultures, sec Coudert, 'Myth of the Improved Status of Protestant Women', 70-80. According to Burghartz, 'Equation of Women and Witches', 68, trials in Lucerne from 1450 onwards 'make it clear that women accused of witchcraft and sorcery were also, again and again, accused of unusual or undesirable behaviour that was alleged to be inappropriate to their role as women but had nothing to do with witchcraft as such'.

[121] For the demonization of transgressive women in Tudor and Stuart drama, see Belsey, *Subject of Tragedy.*184-5; I do not agree that this placed them 'outside and beyond the system of differences which defines and delimits men and women' (p. 185). Drcscn-Coenders, 'Witches as Devils' Concubines', in cad., *Saints and She-Devils.* 67-9, links demonization to fears concerning the inversionary powers of women in the sexual and familial spheres of seduction, marriage, reproduction, and upbringing. Sigrid Brauner, 'Martin Luther on Witchcraft: A True Reformer?', in Brink, Coudert, and Horowitz (eds.), *Politics of Gender.* 29-42, considers Lutheran depictions of witches and ideal wives as logical counterparts (with witches and unruly wives as analogues).

[122] Tasso and Tasso, *Of manage and wiving.* sig. D4'.

[121] Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance. 202. citing zl merry ieste of a shrewde andcurste wyf lapped in Morrelles skin* (n.d., [1580?]).

[124] *The bridling, sadling and ryding of a rich churle in Hampshire (*1595), in Barbara Rosen (cd.), *Witchcraft in England, 1558-1618* (London, 1969), 214-18 (illustration at 215).

[125] Bernhard Albrecht, *Magia; das ist, Christlicher Bericht von der Zauberey und Hexerey* (Leipzig, 1628), 13; Heinrich von Schultheis, *Eine aussftihrliche Instruction, wie in Inquisition Sachen des grewlichcn Lasters der Zauberey gegen die Zaubere der gottlichen Majestdt und der Christenheit Feinde ohn Gefahr dcr Unschuldigen zu procediren* (Cologne, 1634), 51-2.

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This has not been an account of why witches were 'in fact' women; in fact, many of them—sometimes a high proportion of them—were men.[126] It has been an account of why (from a particular male cultural perspective) they were *conceived* to be women. For witches and highly deviant women were culturally constructed and, thus, made intelligible in terms of the same conceptual relations. In consequence, the witch became one of Beidclman's 'subtle epigrams'—a powerful symbolic vehicle capable of evoking the negative poles of many other hierarchically paired opposites in a particular classification system.[127] If this 'poetics' had parallels outside the texts of the intelligentsia, there is no reason why the same associations and expectations should not have influenced the way witches were recognized in the wider community. But that is another matter. What can now be suggested is that, in the high culture of the age, the conceptual link between witchcraft and highly anomalous women was provided by the symmetries of inversion.

[1,6] On this matter, see the important recent findings in Briggs, 'Women as Victims?'

[117] See above, Ch. 3.

9

Unstable Meanings

> There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.
>
> (1 Corinthians 11:19)

> There are some who are of opinion, That there are no Divells, nor any witches; but reason it sclfe, and the Rul [w] of Contraryes will easily detect that grosse Errour.
>
> [Henry Heers], *The most true and wonderfull narration of two women bewitched in Yorkshire*

> Many other elements will allow us to make explicit the unstable equilibrium of a society that always defines itself by the method of excluding its opposite and yet remains related to that opposite, as if standing out against a background which it both challenges and yet implies.
>
> (Michel de Ccrteau, *L Absent de Thistoire)*

As a focal point of Christian theodicy, demonology was naturally obedient to its deep logic—to the logic of what, following Dumont and Tcherkézoff, I earlier called ‘hierarchical opposition’. In the main, we have been considering this as a source of demonology’s productive strength—as the reason why its arguments worked in containing and explaining the demonic, and constituting witchcraft as a necessary moral presence. It was a consequence of this logic that the sabbat, in particular, was able to survive for so long as something invariant and intelligible—something eminently thinkable.[1] If demonology spoke truths ‘by contraries’, this was only to be expected from writing that had irony both as its subject and in its voice. But there are elements of weakness here too and these have important implications for the eventual decline and collapse of the same arguments. More than once, we have sensed the way in which the internal properties of language could threaten the stability of meanings even as they sustained them—the possibility, indeed (as in some notorious recent formulations), that writers on witchcraft were used by their language, as well as being users of it. It is time, then, to return to the problems raised (but then left) in earlier chapters concerning the potential insecurity of witchcraft representations.

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[1] Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches* Sabbat,* trans. Raymond Rosenthal (London, 1992), focuses attention on the archaic and folkloric origins of the sabbat and the morphological affinities of its component myths, suggesting (p. 6) that interpretation of it in terms of symbolic reversal is plausible but relatively superficial. My argument is that, in order to explain the way the sabbat was construed and made into an apparently coherent unity by the intellectuals and prosecutors of the 16th and 17th c., we must take account of equally powerful but quite different associative principles from those discussed by Ginzburg. Nor can the search for origins tell us about the collapse of this unity.

As a figure of thought (the critical theorists have, after all, been telling us) contrariety is inherently ambivalent. It seems to promote order and coherence by fixing meanings in a clear-cut and economical relationship.[2] * But by defining contraries in relation to each other it entails a constant and ultimately unresolvable semantic exchange between them? The mind only settles on the meaning of one contrary by confronting the meaning of its partner; whereupon the semantic dependence of the second term on the first becomes just as apparent, and the initial act of understanding is unsettled. In this logical sequence there is neither simultaneity, nor priority, only deferment of meaning. As a consequence, the very feature from which discursive stability is sought works all the time as an agent of instability, with the paradoxical result that, to the extent that the argument *a contrariis* succeeds, it is also self-destructive. This is true of asymmetrical (or hierarchical) contrarieties as much as any others. For although in these cases authority steps in arbitrarily to assign more value to one term than the other, this does not stem the endless doubling-back of the logic itself. A positive or ‘superior’ term may be given complete ideological dominance but it will still be dependent for its meaning on its privative or ‘inferior’ partner. It can never be affirmed without the semantic assistance of precisely what it seeks to repress or deny, with the risk that the act of authority that affirms it becomes vulnerable to the charge of mystification. With this, the authority itself becomes weakened and, potentially, discreditable.

This was the case—essentially so—with demonology. Evil and demonism were the inferior (we might even say the ‘fallen’) terms of the hierarchical oppositions most fundamental to the organization of religious discourse in the West. The authority that encompassed them had the weight of the entire Christian tradition behind it. There can scarcely be better examples in European thought of entities defined as deficients, and in the early modern period their derivation *a contrariis* from their positive counterparts continued to be axiomatic. When Luther was asked how the devil might be known, he is said to have replied: ‘Just as our Lord God is the thesis of the Decalogue, so the devil is its antithesis.’[4] John Napier remarked that ‘As God is in the trueth, and the trueth in him, and he is the truth ... So *(a contrariis)* the Devil is in deceit, and deceit in him, and he is deceit, and that so inseparablie, that where the one is, there also is the other.’[5] ‘There is a close connection between lust and magic,’ wrote the Jesuit Maldonado, ‘which is known by its contrary; chastity or God.’[6] According to Van Helmont, ‘a Being, one, true, good, are convertible terms: Therefore in a contrary sense, that which appears to be, which is false, evil, and manifold, are the properties of Satan’.[7] In Richard Bernard’s *Guide to grand-jury men,* the facing lists of‘What the Lord doth’ and ‘What Satan doth’ were a representation in print of contrariety as a logical manoevre in which ‘inferior’ terms were derived from ‘superior’ ones. We saw this too in the early modern Antichrist literature, where its role was identical.[8]

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[2] Peter Burke, ‘Witchcraft and Magic in Renaissance Italy: Gianfrancesco Pico and his *Strix*\ in Anglo (ed.), *Damned Arty* 40, says that the conceptualization of alien beliefs in terms of opposition rests on the intellectual principle of‘least effort’.

[3] I adopt these deconstructive terms of art simply because of the close parallels between Jacques Derrida’s account of the workings of conceptual opposition in philosophical texts and the behaviour of logical contrariety in demonological texts; see Christopher Norris, *Derrida* (London, 1987), 35,56,82. For a parallel analysis of the logic of negation, see Richard Helgerson, ‘Inventing Noplace, or the Power of Negative Thinking*, *Genrey* 15 (1982), 102, and for an illustration from the anthropology of moieties, see Valeri, ‘Reciprocal Centres’, 136.

[4] Heinrich Decimator, *Gewissens TeuJJet. Das ist: Einfeltiger und Griindlicher Bericht von dem alter erschrecklichsten, Grewlichsten, und grossen TeuJJel, des Gemissens TeuJJel (M^dcbur^y* 1604), sig. Ci’; same Luther citation in Samson, *Neun ... Hexen Predigty* sigs. Tiii’-Tiv', and a similar one (‘der Mensch ist jtzt [nr] gleich ein inversus Decalogus’) in Andreas Celichius, *Heuptartickel Christlicher Lerenach ordnung des Catechismi* (1599, first issued in 1581), in Reu (ed.), *Quellen,* iii. 378. Hocker puts Luther’s principle to work in *Der teufel selbsy* fos. xlv’-xlvii^r, adding verses on the subject by Johann Lauterbach.

But could Bernard ensure that his readers reasoned only in one direction; that in moving back across the page and on to the next pair of contraries they would not reverse his inferences as well as recuperate their gaze? At the same time as it worked to impose movement from left to right, his typographical device allowed for—in fact, facilitated—movement from right to left. This would only have been consistent with the double logical necessity built into relations of contrariety. But as we have seen it was, in any case, acknowledged in Christian metaphysics in the form of the idea that evil ‘set of? the good and enabled it to be better grasped. Witchcraft authors were, therefore, committed not only to the dependency of the inferior on the superior term, but to the idea that the superior was unintelligible without the inferior. In the face of either general religious and moral doubt, technical Sadducism, or merely qualms about publicizing witchcraft, their whole intellectual engagement could be defended as an example, perhaps even the paradigm case, of the principle that the appreciation of good consisted in the recognition and exploration of its privative opposite. This defence, it should be stressed again, was as much a logical as a theological matter. Sadducism concerning witchcraft was intolerable not simply because denial of spirits in one area led to denial of spirits in others by contagion, but because it led to this by logical necessity.

Thus, the authors of the *Malleus maleficarum* repeated Augustine’s view that sin ‘adorned’ the universe and contributed to its perfection, and then applied it to God’s permission of witchcraft.[9] So too, nearly 200 years later, did the Capuchin Jacques d’Autun, adding that even the pagans had deduced that the world was orderly' from the fact that it was composed of contraries.[10] According to the French Minim Pierre

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[1] John Napier, // *plaint discovery, of the whole revelation ofS. John* (Edinburgh, 1611), 247-8 (first pub. 1593).

[6] Maldonado, *Traictedes anges el demons,* fo. 178'.

’ Van Helmont, *Oriatrike,* 570.

* Bernard, *Guide to grand-jury men,* 258-66 (see above, Ch. 6); for Antichrist literature, see above, Ch. 4.

’ [Kramer and *Sprcn^er], Malleus maleficarum,* 173-4,seealso 164,198 (‘good things are more highly commendable, arc more pleasing and laudable, when they are compared with bad things’). See also the citations in Ch. 7 nn. 1 and 2, above.

•° D’Autun, *L 'Incredulitesfavante,* 908-11,914; cf. Candido Brognolo, *Manuale exorcistarum acparo~chorum, hoc est tractatus de curatione, acprotectione divina* (Venice, 1683), 71 (first pub. 1658): ‘malum habet ordincm ad id, quod est ci oppositum, nempc bonum; in quo non parum auget pulchritudinem ct perfectionem Universi, quae es ilia oppositione consurgit, in quantum per earn bonum ct clarius agn’oscitur, ct ardentius appetitur. Hanc emm stabilivit diversitatem in hoc mundo, ut unicuiquc rci contrarium aliquot

Nodé, the greater the realization (through the effects of witchcraft) that the devil was powerful, crafty, and totally evil, the greater the corresponding realization that God was (‘au contraire’) still more powerful, yet more wise, and absolutely good.[11] Invocators of devils should deduce this for themselves, argued another Frenchman, Daniel Drovin. Being familiar with evil spirits should make them more, not less, aware of the good ones; more, not less, aware of God and Christ: ‘For as much as the contrary makes known the contrary, as the hot by the cold, the heavy by the light, the strong by the weak, the big by the small, the daylight by darkness, the good by the evil’.[12] Antoine de Laval, who thought it was more of a weakness to say that the true could not be grasped without the false, spoke of those who were unwilling ‘to admit the Being of him who is the Supreme Being himself, and who grants it to all things, except by the supernatural effects of [the devil], who would destroy, ruin, and annihilate everything.’[13]

The most revealing example of this reverse (not to say, perverse) reasoning occurs in James VI and I’s *Daemonologie* (1597), at the point where the existence of spirits is asserted. James argues the routine point that Sadducism leads necessarily to atheism, adding this unusually explicit gloss:

> For since the Devill is the verie contrarie opposite to God, there can be no better way to know God, then by the contrarie; as by the ones power (though a creature) to admire the power of the great Creator: by the falshood of the one to considder the trueth of the other, by the injustice of the one, to considder the Justice of the other: And by the cruelty of the one, to considder the mercifulnesse of the other: And so foorth in all the rest of the essence of God, and the qualities of the Devill.[14]

Here in essence is the paradox inherent in the logic of contrariety and, thus, also in demonology’ and witchcraft beliefs. In one sentence James moves in both its directions, deconstructing his argument even in the act of establishing it. Banished to the furthest and lowest point of opposition, the devil returns not merely to assist with the knowledge of God but as the best source of that knowledge. As Willem Frijhoff once remarked, he was the ‘system’s arch-enemy, who nevertheless occupied an internal

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sive in naturalibus, sive in moralibus assignatum videatur... Quare conveniens est, a Deo mala, ac maleficia permitti, ut bonum oppositum et clarius agnoscatur, et ardentius appetatur, per quod mundus nova quotidie recipit decoris, et perfectionis incrementa.’

[11] Nodé, *Declamation,* ‘Advertissement au lecteur’.

[12] Drovin, *Vengeances divines, fas.* 108'-9^{r}(= 189*—90^{r}).

” Antoine de Laval, *Desseins de professions nobles et publiques* (Paris, 1605), fo. 387* (‘Des philtres, Breuvages, Charmes, Sortileges, Anneaux magiques, et autres fascinations diaboliques en amour’).

[14] James VI and I, *Daemonologie,* 55. See also Meric Casaubon, *A treatise proving spirits, witches and supernatural operations by pregnant instances* (London, 1672), 7-8, ‘by the doctrine of contraries, it will follow, that what tends to the illustration, or confutation of the one, doth in some sort equally belong unto the other’; and Giovanni Andrea Gilio, *Trattato ...de la emulazione, die ildemonio hafatta a Dio, ne I'adoratione ne'sacrificii, et ne le altre cose appartenentralla divinita* (Venice, 1563), preface (on the ‘law’ of contraries) and *passim,* for a study which begins with the devil’s copying of the true religion of the Old Testament through idol cults and then becomes an account of God’s opposite qualities and attributes (on magic, see esp. fos. 32'-37’). For the same notion in the context of rebellion, see Thomas Starkey, *An exhortation to the people, instructynge theym to unitie and obedience* (London, n.d. [1536]), sigs. Aii'-Aiii'.

place' in it.[15] Despite their enormous moral disparity, the two opposed terms of James's argument are, by logical necessity, indispensable to each other, and their shared identity-in-difference compels him to shift his attention continuously between them. The question of where priority lies is thus left open, despite the ostensible aims of the author in seeking totally to discredit his subject-matter and exclude it from Christian society. In these circumstances, it is more than tempting to apply to the role of demonism in Western religious thought the description given by Jacques Derrida of the situation of writing in Western philosophical thought: 'a debased, lateralized, repressed, displaced theme, yet exercising a permanent and obsessive pressure from the place where it remains held in check'.[16]

It is, no doubt, important to address these matters as issues in the philosophy of language. The categories in terms of which demonology was organized were evidently those of contrariety, and contrariety is a conspicuous example of how meaning is the product of relations of difference and how in consequence it always remains elusive. But precisely because we are dealing with attributes of language we ought to find them illustrated in the ordinary work being done, and in this case being undone, by texts—texts like Bernard's *Guide.* The three chapters preceding this one have taken some of the basic components of demonology—the depiction of demonic disorder as inversion, the resort to stylistic antithesis, and the construction of women's propensities to evil—and considered them as kinds of writing. It is therefore worth pausing, finally, over King James's discursive proposal and its self-destructive implications.

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'... there can be no better way to know God, then by the contrarie'. For some time, the internal ambivalences and contradictions in this remark remained latent in demonology and in depictions of the witches' sabbat. After all, the logic of Christianity was never, to those who proclaimed it, mere logic; it was the design of the Creation itself—its cosmology, its pneumatology, its morality. But two developments brought the instabilities out into the open and led to the sabbat's demise. One was the extent to which, during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation era, witchcraft was made into the ever more faithful opposite of religious truths; the other was the fact that, simultaneously, the Reformation and Counter-Reformation made such truths contestable. The first of these relativized witchcraft, and the sabbat in particular, so tightly to the norms of religion that its status as an objective event became potentially suspect. The fit became so close that witches came to be seen, even by some contemporaries themselves, as the creations of the normal world, not its parodists. The second relativized the norms of religion to the interests of different churches, and turned witchcraft into a recognizably cultural construct.

Of course, King James's principle could be applied to anything of divine origin. In 1590-1 he himself had attempted to write into the confessions of the North Berwick witches a special antipathy between demonism and divine right magistracy—thus authenticating his own, as yet rather tentative, initiatives as ruler of Scotland.[17] In the aftermath of civil wars in the British Isles, the royalist theorist Michael Hudson wrote that it was ‘an Argument which hath no weak or mean influence upon my understanding and judgement to perswade the Divine Excellency of Monarchic, that Satan doth make it the object of his option, as the most glorious disguise for that grand Impostor [Antichrist]’.[18] But especially exact, as the religious conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries grew more fierce, was the opposition between what witches were urged to renounce or defile and what good Christians should practise and believe. The very fact that the devil chose to denounce the Catholic faith and mimic its liturgy at sabbats was said by many Catholic commentators to be incontrovertible proof of its divinity. Devils had an inveterate hatred for human welfare and thus for its basis in the true faith, as the fifteenth-century theologian Nicolas Jacquier had already explained. Their chief aim was thus to persuade witches to profane the Church’s mysteries—for example, by treading and spitting on the cross, and not venerating the sacrament of Christ’s body. Comparable denials of their laws and rites had not been demanded of the ancient Jews and pagans, even though they too had been servants of the devil; good Catholics could draw the obvious conclusion from being singled out in this way.[19]

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[15] Frijhoff, 'Official and Popular Religion in Christianity', 92.

[16] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology,* trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (London, 1976), 270; cf. Norris, *Derrida,* 67.

During the fifteenth century the sabbat was not a prominent feature of demonolog}', being neglected in the *Malleus maleficarum* and altogether denied by other authors.[20] But in the 1520s a lawyer who shared their views, Gianfrancesco Ponzinibio, was able to include among the reasons conventionally given for believing in the sabbat a *ratiotie contra riorum}* that just as in baptism the devil was really, expressly, and publicly renounced, so in re-baptism he must be really, expressly, and publicly worshipped. According to the maxim *contrariorum enim est eadem disciplina,* the same ritual that accompanied the sacrament should accompany its opposite—hence the need for sabbats.[21] Even so, there can be little doubt that it was the Counter-Reformation that made this kind ofauthentication by devils a pressing matter. The French Dominican reformer Sebastien Michaelis urged pious parents to take care in naming their children and choosing godparents on the grounds that the devil opposed these aspects of baptism in particular.[22] To Pierre Crespet it was confirmation of the power of the mass that the devil should seek to make it contemptible by profaning it.[23] Henri Boguet excused his interest in the disgusting rites and sacrifices of the witches' sabbat by insisting that Catholics could derive 'a strong argument' for transubstantiation from them: 'for if we were in error concerning this, the Devil would never have troubled to bring pollution upon the Mass, but would have allowed us to slip further and further into a perpetual idolatry.'[24] The same point was made about the activities of the priest Louis Gaufridy, who in the course of his trial in Aix-en-Provence in 1611 was accused of abusing the sacraments, in part by consecrating hosts at the sabbat and giving them to dogs to eat. Guillaume Du Vair, *premier president* of the *parlement* of Provence, reacted by saying that, despite the scandal, important lessons could be learned from the devil's desperate attacks on the Church's most holy rites: 'which he would not have carried out if he had not thought that they were truly what we believe them to be, that is to say, the certain effects of the word of God, the treasures of his favours, and the sure signs of the salvation of men.'[25]

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[17] Stuart Clark, ‘King James’s *Daemonologie:* Witchcraft and Kingship’, in Anglo (cd.), *Damned Art,* 156-81.

“ Michael Hudson, *The divine right of government: I. natural/, and 2. politique* ([London], 1647), 80.

” Nicolas Jacquier, *Flagellum haereticorum fascinariorum* (Frankfurt/Main, 1581), 159-60; cf. on the devil’s special attention to the mendicant orders, Johannes Nider, *Formicarius:* ‘Daemon quomodo religiosos plus vexat quam alios’, in Hansen, *Quellen,* 89.

[20] See, for example, the rejections by Spina, *Fortalitiumfidei,* sig. Liii'"*, and Ulrich Molitor, *De lamiis elphitonicis mulieribus,* in *Malleus maleficarum* (1669 cdn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 1), 39-40.

[21] Joannes Franciscus Ponzinibius, *Tractatus de lamiis,* in Paolo Grillando, *Tractatus duo: unus de sortilegiis D. Pauli Grillandi... Alter de lamiis et excellentia iuris utriusque D. loannis Francisci Ponzinibii Florentini* (Frankfurt/Main, 1592), 263-4.

[22] Michaelis, *Discourse of spirits,* fo. 86'-' (incorrect pagination).

In 1627, conscious that the argument might be turned round, and Catholics be accused of practising rites very like those of witchcraft, Pierre de Lancre again defended the divinity of the mass by referring to its demonic abuse. If it had not originated with God, he said, devils and witches 'holding it for nothing, would not imitate it like apes, nor abuse it like enemies'.[26] In Bamberg, around the same time, Bishop Friedrich Forner (who believed that witches profaned all seven of the sacraments) was explaining why sabbats occurred among Catholics by saying that the devil could only gain true apostates from the true faith; Protestants were already in this state and represented no gain. Catholic witchcraft was, thus, a 'most splendid, nay most certain, and infallible sign that the true and saving faith, the true gospel, the true sacraments, the true religion are found among Catholics'.[27] The Provincial of the Capuchins of Normandy, Father Esprit Du Bosroger, applied the same logic to the demonic possessions at Louviers in the 1640s—he was the principal exorcist on this occasion. His view was that the devil plagued Catholic religious houses precisely because of their success in creating almost paradisal conditions for their members. Intruding demonic magic into a monastery like Louviers was an example of'absolute contrariety' of values, which would not have been the case without the presence there of the purest religious virtue. With heretics, by contrast, the devil did not bother himself at all.[28] This was confirmed by the principal witch involved, Madeleine

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[2J] Crespet, *Deux Livres,* fo. 384*.

[24] Boguet, *Examen of Witches,* 61. For the same reasoning applied to the real appearances of ghosts, see NoclTaillepied,// *Treatise of Ghosts,* trans. M. Summers (London, 1933),66(orig. pub. 1588).

[25] Cited in Robert Mandrou, *Magistrals et sorciers en France au XW siecle* (Paris, 1968), 203-4; cf. Michaelis, *Admirable historic,* sig. A6*, who also insisted that the devil only counterfeited true worship at his 'synagogues'.

[26] Pierre de Lancre, *Du sortilege* (n.p., 1627), 6-7.

” Friedrich Forner, *Panoplia armaturae Dei, advenus omnem superstilionum, divinalionum, excantationuin, daemonolatnam, et umversat magorum, veneficorum, et sagarum, et ipsiusmet Sathanae insidias, pratstigias et infestationes (Ingolstadt,* 1625), 108, see also 13.

[24] Esprit de Bosroger, *Piete af/ligee,* 14,17-21,226.

Bavent, who insisted that her belief in the Real Presence had never wavered, despite the insulting of the mass at sabbats; 'nay, rather, my faith in His Divine presence in His Eucharist has been confirmed, for it is on this very account that hell and wicked men on earth combine their forces to outrage and defile the Blessed Sacrament.'[29]

Possession was fertile ground for the 'rule of contraries', particularly with regard to the genuineness of transubstantiation. During the Gaufridy affair, the Dominican exorcists used their powers over possessing devils to ask them for opinions about a whole range of other Catholic doctrines and even about doubtful relics.[30] The general point, however, is not simply that anything might be authenticated in this manner but that contrariety made demonic opposition the most reliable test of all. The rationale of highly valued beliefs and institutions would have been seriously undermined without the support received from demonological enquiry. We should remember this when impatient with the descriptive lengths to which witchcraft writers were sometimes prepared to go. Establishing in exact detail what occurred at a witches' sabbat looks initially like arid pedantry, intellectual voyeurism, or, when linked with torture, a kind of sadism. But it can also be construed as a logically necessary way of validating each corresponding contrary aspect of the orthodox world. This helps to explain, for example, the apparent prurience of the jurist Heinrich von Schultheis, whose vast guide to witch-hunting listed each individual question to be put to suspects. Under the heading 'De officio in conventione' there are twelve questions regarding the treatment of the devil as a god, nine dealing with the rejection of Christ, nine on the ritual of demon-worship itself, but also eighteen on the food and drink available at the sabbat, and a further twenty-nine on where they were consumed. Schultheis wanted witches to divulge exactly how, when, and by whom the devil was honoured and Christ renounced, but he also wanted detailed answers regarding the table (and the table-cloth) on which they feasted.[31]

It should not be thought that Catholic authors monopolized the logic of contrariety. Naturally, only they could want proof of the rightness of the mass, or of relics and monasteries. No doubt they were particularly interested in ceremonial matters too. But Protestantism, even with its more spiritualized reading of demonism, required devils to validate its truths too. There is, for example, Beza's claim (in his life of Calvin) that the devil deliberately picked Geneva for the plague-spreading conspiracy of 1545 because this was 'the very place where, in fact, he was being most energetically opposed'.[32] It also seems likely that fears of witchcraft in seventeenth-

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” *The Confessions of Madeleine Bavent,* trans, and ed. M. Summers (London, n.d. [1933]), 51; a trans, of the 1652 edn. of *Histoire de Madeleine Bavent,* compiled by the Oratorian Father Dcsmarets. Other examples of the same argument are Le Normant, *Histoire veritable et memorable,* pt. 1,94-5, and d'Autun, *L 'Incredulite Sfa vante,* 914.

[10] Michaelis, *Admirable historie,* 387-90 and *passim',* for more details, see Ch. 28 below. Expectations about demonic contrariety also served to structure and validate the exorcisms described in Le Normant, *Histoire veritable et memorable,* pt. 2 *(De la vocation des magiciens et magiciennes),* 631-50.

” Schultheis,/Imr/uAr/irAr *Instruction,* 216-23. It has to be said that Schultheis also added the groans and cries of tortured witches to this imaginary dialogue between a 'doctor' and a nobleman.

[12] G. R. Potter and M. Greengrass *(eds.), John Calvin* (London, 1983), 87.

century America stemmed from the conviction that a successful experiment in Puritan living was bound to attract the devil's attention.[33] The Blue Laws of the New Haven colony spoke of him singling New England out for reprisals because it was 'a country devoted unto the worship and service of the Lord Jesus Christ above the rest of the world'.[34] As Richard Baxter wrote in 1691, the works of devils attested to the immortality of the soul and the truth of Christianity, 'in that they maliciously do so much against them'. In Joseph Glanvill's *Saducismus tritimphatus* it was argued reasonably enough that there would not be covenants between witches and devils at all unless both parties believed that the soul survived the body in death; thus were mortalists, atheists, and other 'huffy Wits' confuted by a few old hags and their familiars.[35]

Even the sabbat, usually of little concern to Protestant witchcraft authors, could be made to yield subtle prescriptions for the conduct of the saints. This is what happened in Thomas Cooper's *The mystery of witch-craft* (1617). Cooper argued that various kinds of general errors and failings among the godly were 'figured' in the ceremonies of the witches' covenant. In some cases this meant comparisons unflattering to the godly. Witches, for example, were much more committed and unashamed in making their profession of faith and even vented their blood as a sacrament of their loyalty. Too many temporizers and 'State-Christians' lacked their zeal, and few in the world would actually shed blood for Christ. Mostly, however, Cooper recommended behaviour which was valorized precisely because it was the opposite of demonic—bearing in mind that the devil was a kind of Catholic. If the devil took delight in profaning the Church as a physical place, this was a warning to the godly against the superstition of ascribing holiness to places, the 'pompous and carnail decking of the house of God', and the attitude that only what happened in time of public worship had any benefit for piety. If he insisted that witches undergo fresh baptism, this taught the godly not to presume that salvation was certain once the seal of baptism was made, 'as if outward Baptisme made a Christian, and nothing else'. And if he received the *osculum infame,* this was a blatant reminder of what was carnal and, thus, irrational in a religion of outward observance. The baser the homage, argued Cooper, the more it was binding; reason 'being turned upside-downe' ceded place to the demands of the flesh. 'Popery', that nursery of witchcraft, was also 'most glorious in her greatest libertie to the flesh, in the grossest filthynesse thereof commending horrible uncleannesse not to bee named, as if delighted in kissing Satans backe parts'.[36]

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Arguments like these show that religious polemic demanded that the demonic be

[33] See, for example, Cotton Mather, *Magnolia Christi Americana: or, the ecclesiastical history of Net-England* (London, 1702), bk. 4,66.

[34] *The Blue Laws of New Haven Colony, usually called Blue Laws of Connecticut* (Hartford, Conn., 1838), 299-300; Karlsen, *Devil in the Shape of a Woman,* 4.

[35] Baxter, *Certainty*, 5; Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus*, 372.

[36] Thomas Cooper, *The mystery of witch-craft* (London, 1617), 88-124.

required more and more to complete the knowledge of things godly—required, that is, by the demands of a logic that related God and the devil as hierarchical opposites. Even as educated Europeans combined to make the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the great age of the anti-demonic, their belief systems depended necessarily on what they sought to exclude. In effect, they became increasingly subject to the linguistic phenomenon of 'supplementarity'—what one Derrida scholar describes as a 'strange reversal of values whereby an apparently derivative or secondary term takes on the crucial role in determining an entire structure of assumptions'.[37] What this meant (in principle) for the stability of demonology, and of theodicy itself, has already been suggested. Maintaining the moral priority of the first ('superior') terms in logical relationships subject to constant semantic reversibility could only be achieved by a massive and elaborate assertion of ideology—the authority of Christian values.

Simultaneously, however, these values were no longer broadly agreed and the ideology was no longer single and unchallenged. The texts that depended on the logic of hierarchical opposition remained under control (so to speak) as long as the authority of a unitary church could make both Christian values and their demonic opposites seem objective and automatic—simply the truth about the way things were. Indeed, this continued to be the case even after the religious divisions of the early sixteenth century, since for some time both the Catholic and Protestant churches could still plausibly claim an exclusive access to one set of religious truths. However, the same controversies that turned demonology into religious polemic also brought massive disagreement about just what it was in religion that needed defending. This very fact, and the prolonged doctrinal and ecclesiastical conflict that ensued, made religious authority irrevocably a plural thing and relativized religious truths to different churches. At this point, the contradictory workings of the logic and the consequent strain put on texts were likely to become more apparent.[38]

The arguments we have been considering illustrate this admirably. Wedded still to contrariety but palpably divided by quite different notions of what was godly, they sought to fix the demonic in relation to something that had itself become contingent. Supposedly the constant mimic of a constant God, the devil turned out to be now anti-Catholic, now anti-Protestant—factionalized, we might say. Samuel Harsnett, Church of England chaplain and controversialist on the subject of the English possession cases of the 1590s, thought that the exorcist John Darrel was on course to produce an anti-Puritan devil too: 'we should have had many other pretended signes of possession: one Devill would have been mad at the name of the Presbyter: another

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[17] Norris, *Derrida,* 67.

[M] To some extent, therefore, my argument runs parallel to that of R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany* (London, 1988), 227-8, who associates the breakdown of 'ritual murder discourse', itself founded partly on binary opposites (p. 40), to the collapse of 'the collective solidarity of Christian society' consequent on the Protestant reformation. But Po-Chia Hsia also suggests that witches may have 'replaced Jews as the most dangerous enemies within Christian society', whereas I would prefer to see witchcraft theory as subject to the same displacement.

at the sight of a minister that will not subscribe: another to have seene men sit or stand at the Communion.’[39] There is a sense in which Harsnett was right; these were, in fact, the kinds of devils that later preoccupied the ministers of New England. But even more of a relativist was Francis Hutchinson, for whom ‘the Numbers of Witches, and the suppos’d Dealings of Spirits with them’, increased or decreased according to ‘the Laws, and Notions, and Principles of the several Times, Places, and Princes’. For him (writing in 1718), ‘a Hebrew Witch, a Pagan Witch, a Lapland Witch, an Indian Witch, a Protestant Witch, and a Popish Witch [were] different from one another.’ Partisanship had overtaken demonology.[40]

The relativizing of the devil was not, of course, something that orthodox witchcraft writers themselves could have acknowledged. Their arguments continued to make sense precisely because the tension between the artifice in the logic and the belief in the objective reality of the things being discussed was not apparent. On the other hand, identifying this tension and attributing to it the potential instability of texts should not be seen merely as an intrusive ‘post-modern’ reading, bent on finding and then dismantling conceptual oppositions at whatever cost to the historian’s sense of context. There were, after all, other Harsnetts—others who were sufficiently sceptical about aspects of demonism and witchcraft to point out that these were only derivations *a contrariis* from positive but culturally based religious conceptions and, by implication at least, were non-existent without them.

There was, for example, Reginald Scot, for whom the fact that witches admitted to *anti-Catholic* crimes, which were, in effect, ‘all good steps to true christianitie’, served to ‘confute the residue of their confessions’.[41] There was also the translator (or publisher) of Michaelis’s history of the Gaufridy possessions, who presented them to his English readers as no better than propaganda for Catholicism and Dominicans; in the work, he said,

> the Invocation of Saints, the superstitious use of Images, the propitiatory sacrifice of the Masse, the adoration of the Host, transubstantiation in the Eucharist with Christs very flesh and bones, the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary without sin, and a great deale more of such trumpery, are with earnest asseveration of the Devill himselfe, defended and maintained.[42]

There were Thomas Ady and John Wagstaffe. Anxious to remind Interregnum readers of the earlier scepticism of Scot, Ady remarked again that the signs of a witch in

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[39] [Samuel Harsnett], *A discovery of the fraudulent practises of John Darrell* (1599), cited in D. P. Walker, *Unclean Spirits: Possession and Exorcism in France and England in the late Sixteenth and early Seventeenth Centuries* (London, 1981), 69.

[40] Francis Hutchinson, *An historical essay concerning witchcraft.* 2nd edn. (London, 1720), 67, 70. A parallel may be drawn with the way in which, in the early 18th c., witchcraft became subject to the factional disputes that ‘raged’ among English political and religious parties, particularly during the years 1710-H and the controversy surrounding the case of Jane Wenham in 1712. Bostridge, ‘Debates about Witchcraft’, 179-98, 279, 380, traces the arguments, commenting that factionalization, and the ideological exhaustion to which it led, ‘initiated ... the demise of witchcraft theory as a serious system of belief’.

[41] Reginald Scot, *The discoverie of witchcraft* (London, 1584), 60.

[42] Michaelis, *Admirable historic.* ‘To the Reader’, sigs. H3^{r}"*.

Catholic demonology were but ‘steps to the reformed Religion’.[43] Witches’ confessions, said Wagstaflfe, were ‘dictated unto these miserable wretches, by the very Inquisitors themselves; with a design to advance the reputation of the Virgin Mary, and the Sacraments of their own Church’.[44] Finally, there was also Sir Robert Filmer, whose sceptical pamphlet *An advertisement to the jury men of England, touching witches* (1653) was occasioned partly by the execution of witches at Maidstone in Kent in 1652 but mainly by his anti-Calvinism.[45] Remarkably, Filmer thought that both major religious denominations had created witches in their own mirror images—that witches were nothing but the contraries of Christians. Del Rio the Jesuit had said that the demonic covenant consisted of denial of the Christian faith, of obedience to God, and of the patronage of the Virgin Mary; Perkins the Puritan that it meant renouncing God and baptism. ‘But if this be common to all Contracts with the Devill,’ commented Filmer, ‘it will follow that none can be witches but such as have first becne Christians, nay and Roman Catholiques, if Delrio say true, for who else can renounce the patronage of the Virgin Mary?’[46] Filmer did not wish to infer that some other, religion-neutral account of the witches’ covenant might be believable. The rest of his pamphlet makes clear his rejection of the whole idea. His remark stands, therefore, as a revealing contemporary interpretation of the most central component of witchcraft as (what would now be called) a cultural construct.

Ady, Filmer, and Wagstaffc were writing as witchcraft prosecutions declined. But the same corrosive (shall we say Dcrridean?) relativism had first appeared eighty years before in Johann Weyer’s *De praestigiis daemonttm* (1563). Weyer reported (in a passage that Reginald Scot obviously had in mind) that, according to the *Malleus maleftcarum,* witches were expected to honour their compact with the devil by observing ‘certain ceremonies against the statutes of the church’. These included fasting on Sundays, eating meat on Fridays and Saturdays, concealing sins during confession, spitting while the Host was elevated, and chattering during the singing of the mass. But what sort of transgressions were these, asked Weyer gleefully? One might fast *and* pray on Sunday, as on any other day, without it affecting the service of God. How could anyone ever confess all his or her sins, if sin tainted every thought, word, and deed? There was as much trespass in spitting during the elevation as in not spitting, in worthless talk during mass as in worthless talk after it—precisely none at all. Weyer (as we shall eventually see) was not at all sceptical about demons and demonism. For him, the devil was a real and vital contrary force in the world, with whom Christians might battle and so savour victory and praise; with whom too

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[4'] Thomas Ady, *A candle in the dark; or, a treatise concerning the nature of witches and witchcraft* (London, 1656), 100.

[44] John Wagstaffc, *The question of witchcraft debated. Or a discourse against their opinion that affirm witches,* 2nd edn. (I^jndon, 1671), 65, see also 69-76 (and below, Ch. 39).

[41] On Filmcr’s reasons for writing, see Bostridge, ‘Debates about Witchcraft’, 32-55.

[44] (Robert Filmer], *An advertisement to the jury-men ofEngland, touching witches* (London, 1653), 6; cf. James Howell, *Epistolae Ho-Elianae,* ed. J. Jacobs (2 vols.; London, 1890-2), ii. 550 (letter of 20 Feb. 1647).

(male) magicians might enter agreements. It was the existence of (female) witchcraft that he denied. Its central constituent—contrariety—was no more than the logical device by which Catholic priests and theologians criminalized deluded old women. It could be argued that in the whole of his long and rambling book this is the single most subversive thing that Weyer says about witchcraft—much more telling, perhaps, than any of his medical theorizing, or his Erasmianism, or his moral indignation. In effect, even though he was a contemporary of the belief system supporting the sabbat, he was able to analyse its workings as some recent readers have analysed the workings of literary texts. He was one of those rare insiders with an outsider's perspective. Thanks to the relativism that was implicit in fundamental religious difference, and to the degree of detachment afforded by his own faith—thanks, perhaps, to occasions when real Lutherans, like alleged witches, actually did parody and invert Catholic rituals[47]—he was able to turn something natural into something cultural, something given into something made. And once this had happened, nothing, at least in principle, could be quite the same way again.[48]

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We should remember these arguments when assessing the general direction and effectiveness of early modern scepticism about witchcraft. Sceptics adopted a variety of strategies, some of which questioned the reality of the crime as a possible physical action, others the reliability of the authorities and evidences cited, and yet others the propriety of judicial proceedings against the accused. But to show that the logic of contrariety was, after all, *only* a piece of logic was to attack witchcraft beliefs at their conceptual foundation. Once the attributes of the witch were seen as merely the opposites of shifting religious allegiances, their conformity to the essentially artificial demands of linguistic protocol became more significant than their role in explaining real behaviour. The endless circularity, and hence deferment, that was always implicit in the logic became explicit, and the authority that had hitherto held it in check was exposed as arbitrary and, in consequence, contestable. The example of Weyer also shows what one would, in any case, expect—that the attributes of devils, together with the traditional logic of evil and sin, were not deconstructed so rapidly or so readily as were the attributes of witches. But they were, in principle, subject to the same contradictions and, thus, vulnerable to the same exposure.

Conceived of in these terms, the history of scepticism and the decline of demonology look rather different than they did when witchcraft studies were dominated by the linguistics of reference. If the important thing about representations is that they refer accurately and objectively to real events in the real world, they will become unstable and untenable when they are thought not to do so. Their success depends on the way they match up with things, and once they are seen not to do this the way is open for them to be jettisoned in favour of more accurate ideas. In this view, witchcraft beliefs ceased to persuade when they were falsified by comparison with reality. And yet the history of the concept of the sabbat, for example, was not quite like this. As a representation of things it was, so to speak, underdetermined by reality and overdetermined by theory. A ‘differential’ account of meaning, such as the one I have been exploring, therefore yields a more suitable account of its change and decline. Here, it is not the external fit with reality that governs the success of ideas and texts but their internal linguistic stability. In the case of demonology, the dominance of privileged first terms set in hierarchical opposition to their contraries was for a long time successful in yielding coherent and persuasive arguments. However, once the two reformations were under way the very enthusiasm with which writers of different religious persuasions gave authenticating roles to devils betrayed the instability of the logic involved. Attaching so much importance to ‘inferior’ second terms gave them a privileged position they were not supposed to have in hierarchical oppositions. At the same time, the priority of the first terms could no longer be assumed to be natural and automatic. It came to be seen as something that had to be worked at and maintained by the intellectual effort, not to say contrivance, of arresting the circularity of the logic by superimposing values on it. Above all, perhaps, these values were eventually recognized as partial and culturally based—arbitrary, I have said. This, it may be argued, is what robbed demonology of its basis in objective reality, rather than any failure to refer.

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[47] Details in R. W. Scribner, 'Ritual and Reformation', in Po-Chia Hsia (ed.), *Cennan People,* 122-44.

” Weyer, *Depraestigiis daemonum,* 177-9; cf. id., *De lamiis,* cols. 3&-40, and [Kramer and Sprenger], *Malleus maleficarum.* 229. Foran extended discussion of Weyer, see Ch. 13 below.

PART II

Science

10

Witchcraft and Science

> O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.
>
> (Psalms 104:24)

> How farre the power of Spirits and Divels doth extend ... is a serious question and worthy to be considered.
>
> (Robert Burton, *The anatomy of melancholy)*

> [The stories of witchcraft] contain nothing but what is consonant to right Reason and sound Philosophy.
>
> (Joseph Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus)*

No two things could be further apart, seemingly, than demonology and science. Yet between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries—leaving some very considerable moral issues aside—the questions that dominated learned discussions of witchcraft concerned its very possibility as a genuine occurrence in the physical world. Demonology was the study of a natural order in which the existence of demonic actions and effects was, largely, presupposed. But there were still matters of detail to discuss. Could devils and witches really achieve all the effects that were commonly attributed to them? Could witches, for example, be transported, with or without their bodies, to sabbats? Were their alleged sexual exploits with devils true or false and, if true, could they lead to the birth of offspring? Could witches transform themselves, or others, into animals? More mundanely, could they cause storms by incantations and rites, or bring illnesses merely by looking at their victims or cursing them? From Johannes Nider, Alphonsus de Spina, and Ulrich Molitor to Joseph Glanvill, Balthasar Bekker, and Christian Thomasius these, and a cluster of related questions, were debated over and over again in literally hundreds of texts. They were particularly prominent in the earlier period, when witchcraft theory was influenced heavily by the *Canon episcopi,* a ninth-century canon that attributed night flying and the sabbat to demonic illusion.[1] Nevertheless, these same questions provided the main agenda for the literature of witchcraft throughout its history, and they explain why the style and tone adopted by its authors often seem just as interrogative—

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[1] See, for example, Bernard de Como [Comensis], *Traclatus de strigibus* (written *c.* 1510), in *Malleus malejicarum(\W)* cdn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 2). 109-30, where the arguments all concern the problems of reality and illusion raised by the Canon; and Girolamo Visconti, *Lamiarum site striarum opusculum* (Milan, 1490, written r. 1460). *Malleus maleficarum* itself begins with discussions concerning the causality of witchcraft. On the *Canon episcopi,* see Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Lam* (Brighton, 1978), 71-8.

indeed, just as inquisitorial—as the legal investigations into witchcraft themselves must often have been. The important point is that the whole dispute centred on whether, as a matter of fact, certain physical events could actually take place in the real world. This meant asking which laws of cause and effect they obeyed, and which they infringed. There is, therefore, nothing odd in Wilhelm Adolf Scribonius, the Corbach natural philosopher, entitling his witchcraft treatise *De sagarum natura et polestate ... physiologia.* Whatever else one thinks about the matters that were discussed by Scribonius and others like him, it is hard to deny that the form of the discussion, at least, was broadly, but genuinely, scientific.

But so were the matters themselves. Almost instinctively, modern science refers the deeds of devils and witches to a realm of 'supernature' wholly beyond natural laws; the only way to account for them naturalistically today is by complete redescription. As C. S. Lewis wrote, 'such creatures are not part of the subject matter of *"natural* philosophy"; if real, they fall under pneumatology, and, if unreal, under morbid psychology.'[2] This means that demonology, like astrology or alchemy, has invariably been regarded as an 'occult' or 'pseudo' science and, therefore, incompatible with scientific insight and progress. Usually, reasons other than those intrinsic to it have been sought for its popularity and longevity; it was the product, so it has been said, of lingering superstition, of irrationality, or, worse still, of collective derangement. But the history (as well as the anthropology) of science shows that the perceived boundary between nature and supernature, if it is established at all, is local to cultures, and that it shifts according to tastes and interests. The one now generally in force among the tribes of the West is only as old as the scientific production that goes with it. Before 'Enlightenment' and the coming of the 'new' science, things were different, metaphysically speaking, and nature was thought to have other limits. In fact, the ontology of the demonic was entirely the reverse of today's. In early modern Europe it was virtually the unanimous opinion of the educated that devils, and, *a fortiori,* witches, not merely existed in nature but acted according to its laws. They were thought to do so reluctantly and (as we shall see) with a good many unusual, or 'preternatural' manipulations of phenomena, yet they were always regarded as being inside the general category of the natural. Devils, wrote one typical witchcraft theorist, 'cannot advance natural things without natural causes being present'; witches, he deduced, could do nothing 'that surmounts the forces of nature'.[3] It was what was natural about their alleged behaviour that made it a physical possibility and, thus, believable; what was unnatural was deemed to be impossible and delusory These were matters of principle for writers on witchcraft; for them, *not* to accept them was superstitious and irrational. We, on the contrary, have to set aside some of our most automatic assumptions to grasp their significance.

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[2] *C.S.Leviis,Studies in* J *I'ords* (Cambridge, 1960), 67 (author's italics).

[1] Thomas Erastus, *Repetitio disputationis de lamiis seu strigibus: in qua plene, solide, et perspicue, de arte earum, potestate, itemque poena diseeptatur* (Basel, 1578). The work eventually consisted of two dialogues, but the first does not appear in this edn., in the later edn. (Amberg, 1606), or in the version printed with Jacquier's *Flagellum haereticorumfascinariorum* (Frankfurt/Main, 1581). I have therefore used the French trans, by Simon Goulart, published with the French version of Weyer's *De praestigiis daemonum,* issued by Jacques Chovct (Geneva, 1579) and reissued as part of the series 'Bibliothèque Diabolique'; see Erastus, *Deux Dialogues... touchant le pouvoir des sorcieres et de la punition qu 'elles meritent,* in Jean Wicr [Johann Weyer], *Histoires, disputes et discours, des illusions et impostures des diables,* cd. D. M. Bourneville (2 vols.i Paris, 1885), ii. 486-7.

In this respect, early modem demonology was dependent on a well-established partitioning of phenomena. The demands of medieval Christianity itself were that the devil should be strong in relation to men and weak in relation to God, a power differential of which St Thomas Aquinas's discussion 'Whether angels can work miracles' was the model account. Angels did seem capable of miraculous actions, as did demons—the skills the latter imparted to magicians being an example. But (Aquinas argued) something could only be properly called a miracle if it took place entirely outside the natural order, of which the powers of all angels, being creatures, were necessarily a part. Its causation was, accordingly, the prerogative of the Creator alone. God might work miracles at the request of angels or through their ministry (only the latter in the case of demons). Otherwise, all presumed examples of angelic agency beyond nature must be attributed to human mistakes about just where the natural limits of actions lay. This was the case with demonic magic; it was thought to exceed nature but was in fact worked entirely through the natural powers of demons, and only seemed miraculous by comparison to the natural powers of men and women ('relatively to us'). Aquinas's point, to be endlessly elaborated in the demonology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was that Satan worked not miracles *(miracula)* but wonders *(mira).* What he did was different in kind from what God could do but different only in degree from the actions of mortals.[4]

Tying demonism to ultimately natural causes had the necessary consequence of tying orthodox demonology to a particular natural philosophy—that of late medieval and early modern scholasticism, with its Christianised Aristotle and animistic physics and cosmology. It was impossible, in principle, to apply the Thomistic categories to specific phenomena without theoretical assistance from science, with the result that witchcraft theory presupposed a thoroughgoing naturalism. In a sense, it was another example of *physica specialise* an application of the general principles of physics to one particular category of natural actions.[5] * It has often been depicted as intellectually incoherent and inflammatory in its rhetoric, but one of its main aims was to demystify demonic pretensions by subjecting them to careful, and essentially negative, scrutiny—sorting out, in particular, just where the limits of demonic efficacy via second causes were reached and the realm of fantasy and delusion began.[6] As an early seventeenth-century Dillingcn philosopher explained, the false (i.e.

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[4] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae.* xv. 15-17; cf. id., *Summa contra Gentiles.* in *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas, cd.* Anton C. Pegis (2 vols.; New York, 1945), ii. 201-3.

[5] For the scope of 'physics' and the relationship between *physica generalis* and *physica speaahs (orparticularis^sec J. L. lAe'dbron. Elements of Early Modem Physics (London.* 1982), *1-5*

[4] In the case of Binsfeld, forcing this illuminating concession from Lea, *Materials,* it. 57V. s -t i curious to observe the acuteness with which the reality of sorcery is proved by arguments drawn not only from theology and the Scriptures, but from etymology, physics, laws and almost every other source, the subject being treated as a dry legal and philosophical question.*

demonic) arts were worthy of scientific study alongside the true ones.[7] This naturalism was strengthened by comparisons that likened the devil to some astonishingly knowledgeable and adept scientist. Indeed, he was portrayed quite precisely as an expert in what even many Aristotelians called ‘occult qualities’. But this had nothing to do with what is meant by the ‘occult’ today, since one of the most widely held assumptions in contemporary natural philosophy was that the qualities in question were real qualities which, even if they could not be perceived, were capable of causing real effects.

Although theological in inspiration, then, Aquinas’s arguments issued at every stage in questions about the precise workings of the natural—and, especially, the preternatural—world. While the principle that only the Creator could break its laws was unshakeable, the correct classification of individual phenomena might well prove both empirically troublesome and politically controversial. The requirement that true miracles be ‘beyond the order of the whole created nature’ tied their authentication, along with the exposure of demonic counterfeits, to an exact understanding of where nature’s boundaries actually occurred.[8] The deduction that demons were imprisoned within natural causation left for study the problem of how their (albeit wonderful) effects were physically caused (Aquinas himself offered this research proposal: ‘Spiritual powers are able to effect whatever happens in this visible world, by employing corporeal seminal principles by local movement’). Above all, to admit that *tnira* were confused with *miracttla* only because knowledge in this area was partial and fallible was to issue an open invitation for the improvement of natural knowledge.

These questions preoccupied the specialists on demonism and witchcraft, who remarked how necessary it was to bring natural philosophical expertise to their subject.[9] But they were also critical to natural philosophy as a whole, where the deeds of angels and devils still had to be accorded a place in physics and medicine.[10] Demonology was, therefore, not simply a one-way adaptation of scholastic ontology and epistemology to a particular class of *tnira.* In return, it was important to theorists of natural knowledge who, while they had little or no interest in actual witch trials, sensed demonology’s relevance to the broader philosophical debates of the period. This was the spirit, for example, in which, during the 1490s, the Franciscan Thomas Mumer entered into discussions concerning the causation of *maleficium* with scholars at the university of Freiburg, and in which the Aristotle scholar Agostino Nifo wrote an account of demons ‘according to natural reasons and physical causes’.[11] What seems to have preoccupied seventeenth-century English medical writers like John Cotta and William Drage was not witchcraft belief but witchcraft *knowledge*,* Cotta’s *The triall of witch-craft,* in particular, is a sustained analysis of what it meant to know (‘discover’) witches in terms of a traditional epistemology of sense experience, reasoning, and conjecture. Many of the disputations on witchcraft matters in Europe’s university faculties were, likewise, attempts to solve natural philosophical problems to do with the reality and extent of demonic causation. Among the natural philosophers at Wittenberg in the 1620s, for example, it was assumed that *actiones magicae* fell within the scope of the physics syllabus, since although the devil, as their originator, might not be relevant, the subjects of his operations and the operations themselves certainly were. These included the flight to the sabbat, sexual congress between witches and devils, and the supposed metamorphosis of humans into wolves.[12]

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[7] Georg Stengel, *praises* (Nicolaus Diem, *proponens), Castigatio philosophica, malarum quarundam artfam, partim antiquarum, partim recentium, pro solenni disputatione* (Dillingen, 1617), 1; cf. Paul H. Kocher, *Science and Religion in Elizabethan England* (San Marino, Calif., 1953), 121-2, who says that satanic phenomena were considered to be ‘on the same plane as other natural phenomena and, like them, susceptible of observation and study’. Kocher adds, however, that the devil had to be excluded from nature if scientific knowledge was to improve (p. 121).

’ Peter Dear, ‘Miracles, Experiments, and the Ordinary Course of Nature’, *Isis,* 81 (1990), 672.

’ e.g. Ciruelo, *Treatise,* 83; Gaulc, *Cases of conscience,* 98; d’Autun, *L’Incredulitesfavante,* preface.

[10] e.g. by the professor of philosophy at Ferrara for half a century, Tommaso Giannini, *De famine, de mente ejfectrice et speciebus intelligibilibus, de daemonibus et mentibus a materia separatis disputationes* (Ferrara, 1615), 164-456 (‘Disputatio Aristotelica’), first pub. 1588. (On Giannini see Charles H. Lohr, ‘Renaissance Latin Aristotle Commentaries’, *Renaissance Quart.* 30 (1977), 700.) Other typical examples: Nicolaus Biesius, *De natura* (Antwerp, 1573), fos. 94'-95‘; id., *De universitate libri ires quibus universa de natura philosophia continetur* (Antwerp, 1556), 58-9;Jan Amos Comenius, Mimni//p/ii7ojop/n> *reformed by divine light: or, a synopsis of physicks,* (London, 1651), 228-38.

Describing the devil as a worker in occult causes and wonderful effects also established an epistemological (though not, of course, a moral) equivalence between demonic agency and the subject matter of‘natural magic’. In effect, *magia daemonica* and *magia naturalis* were natural philosophical analogues, providing parallel explanations—sometimes in competition, sometimes in alliance—for the same range of phenomena. Natural magic, moreover, was one of the most enduring enthusiasms of early modem natural philosophers; we shall see that the Aristotelians, the Neoplatonists and ‘hermeticists’, and even some of the proponents of the ‘new philosophy’ were all committed to it. The consequence was that demonology enjoyed a currency in scientific debate that was almost independent of any concern to prosecute witches. For this was a period when the correct identification and classification of things like miracles and wonders became increasingly difficult and contentious. The ‘secret causes’ of such phenomena, wrote one witchcraft author, were ‘involved with much ambiguity and mistincsse’.[13] In this further perspective, demonology takes on the character of a Baconian ‘prerogative instance’. It dealt with a particularly perverse subject-matter where the problems of distinguishing between the possible and the impossible, and between supernaturc, preternature, and ordinary nature became paradigmatic. Finally, demonology entered the debates about incorporeal substance in Restoration England, where the newest scientific ideals and the oldest witchcraft beliefs came momentarily together in support of Anglican theology and natural philosophical respectability.

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[11] Thomas Mumer, *Tractatus depythonico contractu,* in *Malleus maleficarum* (1669 cdn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 1). 52-65. For Nifo’s *De demonibus* (pub. with his *De intellectu* in 1503), I rely on Thorndike, *History of Magic,* v. 71-85.

[12] Jacobus Martinus, *praeses* (Heinrich Nicolai, *respondent), Diaskepsis philosophica, de rnagicis actionibus earumqueprobationibus,* 2nd edn. (n.p. [Wittenberg], 1623), sig. A2"*; for further examples, see below, Ch. 17.

[12] Michaelis, *Discourse of Spirits,* 7.

These are the main themes of the sequence of chapters that immediately follows. Perhaps the best way to introduce it is by suggesting that we would do better to associate demonology with development and, indeed, ‘advancement’, in natural knowledge than with stagnation or decay. If the devil was a part of early modern nature, then demonology was, of necessity, a part of early modern science—in which case, there was no reason for it to remain intellectually inert. Implicit in its medieval inheritance was a programme for further enquiry, an agenda of discussable issues in metaphysics, epistemology, and physics, which, far from being threatened by any improved understanding of natural causation, actually presupposed this. Indeed, the issues became more and more pressing. We shall see that the need to reconsider the validity' of preternatural phenomena of every kind, and the rules for categorizing them, became especially urgent. Here lay the scope for a genuinely natural and genuinely scientific exploration of the demonic.

* * *

If this idea still seems paradoxical, it is because the general weight of opinion since the eighteenth century has been entirely against it. When demonology eventually ceased to interest natural philosophers, their rationalism quickly gave it a reputation for standing in the way of reason and progress. In the twentieth century this has been compounded by highly influential depictions of ‘the scientific revolution’ as a single, decisive, and modernizing transformation, achieved by heroic discoverers extending the frontiers of truth at the expense of magic and similar errors. The assumption throughout has been that witchcraft beliefs were somehow inimical to the welfare of science—that they were consistent, at best, with an ossified Aristotelianism and were quickly and inevitably overhauled as soon as the pace of scientific change quickened. What has come to be accepted, according to one scholar, is ‘an almost perfect correlation between the rise of science and the decline of magic’.[14] In this perspective, Thomistic puzzles of the devils-and-miracles type, not to mention questions about the reality of witches’ sabbats or of metamorphosis and *maleficium,* have seemed like expressions of ignorance, not knowledge. As more and more came to be known about nature, the argument has been, so it was less and less likely that witchcraft would continue to be accepted as a real thing.

Rescuing intellectuals (and indeed anybody who felt that to believe in witchcraft was to *know* something) from this particular condescension has recently been made easier, however, by fundamental changes in the history and philosophy of science. Plainly, ‘the scientific revolution’ is not what it was. Although ‘revolutionary’ is still defended as the right characterization of the scientific changes of the seventeenth century, virtually nothing survives of the romanticism and triumphalism that once marked historical descriptions of them.[15] Innovation itself is not now regarded as a

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[14] Charles Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton: Magic and the Making of Modern Science* (Cambridge 1982), 1.

” The case is made by Roy Porter, ‘The Scientific Revolution: A Spoke in the Wheel?’, in Roy Porter monopoly of the 'mechanical philosophy', and the period in which it occurred has been stretched over time, so that the ages of Paracelsus and Newton no longer seem like 'entirely discrete intellectual worlds'.[16] The eclectical inspiration for change and its part-attribution to traditions of knowledge conventionally regarded as non-scientific and even non-rational is also widely recognized. A succession of scholars has brought the 'occult' studies, together with Neoplatonism and 'hermeticism' in general, into the mainstream of early modern scientific development and shown how they remained vital ingredients of advanced thought into the last decades of the seventeenth century. At the same time, siting scientific developments in their social and ideological contexts has shown them to be far more complex, contentious, and, above all, contingent, than previously thought. As a result, simplistic and anachronistic polarities no longer divide natural philosophy from other areas of early modern thought and practice—notably religion and politics—with which it interacted, or prevent us from resolving such former paradoxes as Bacon the natural magician, or Newton the alchemist. Finally, the dismissive judgements that used to be levelled at surviving antique modes of natural philosophical thought (above all, Aristotelianism) and teaching (above all, the universities) have been completely revised.

The implications of these changes in perspective are still being worked out. Their effect so far—with the exception of the strongest of the claims made by Frances Yates and other early defenders of'hermeticism'—has been not to substitute some new story of progress for the old one but, rather, to lessen the influence of teleology altogether. This makes it possible to retrieve the natural philosophy of the witch-prosecuting centuries without paying any attention to its possession or lack of the attributes of modern science. Less frequent too is the use of labels with anachronistic connotations—especially 'magic', 'the occult', and so on—to identify and demarcate the interests of pre-modern intellectuals and insinuate their deficiencies. 'In the seventeenth century', it has been claimed, 'there was no clear line of demarcation between occultism, philosophy, religion, and science. Over large areas of belief, it simply was not the case that the modern philosophers had a monopoly of truth, meaningfulness, evidence, reasonableness, or even of a rational scheme of concepts.'[17]

Thus it is that opportunities for reassessing the scientific status of demonology present themselves.[18] The general style of natural philosophy to which it was predominantly tied is now recognized to have been both pedagogically dominant and intellectually alive throughout the main period of the witchcraft trials. Charles Schmitt (to whom we owe this recognition) wrote that 'Aristotle still provided the

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and Mikuláš Teich(cds.), *Revolution in Ilistory* (Cambridge, 1986), 290-316, csp. 300-4, who also surveys the historiography of the 'scientific revolution'.

[16] Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton,* 1 (and 1-12).

[17] G. MacDonald Ross, 'Occultism and Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century', in A. J. Holland (cd.), *Philosophy: Its History and Historiography* (Dordrecht, 1985), 107.

” For an earlier attempt at this, see Stuart Clark, 'The Scientific Status of Demonology', in Brian Vickers (cd.), *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1984), 351-74.

overarching principle for the textbooks from which Christians from all parts of Europe and ofall shades of belief learned their philosophy and science.’[1]’ We are also in a far better position to grasp why the specialism to which theorizing about magic and witchcraft was, from a natural philosophical point of view, most obviously allied—that is to say, the study of pretemature—became crucial to the workingout of many of the conceptual and empirical puzzles that characterized early modern science. If natural magic transcended scientific allegiances, this was because of the importance attached to turning occult qualities into properly knowable things, a challenge to scholars that historians of science have now shown was continuous between Oresme and Newton.

Linked to this was the wider attention given to the unusual and abnormal aspects of the physical world. Unincorporable in strict scholasticism, where singularity was thought to mislead, and subordinated in much later times to the iron regularity of newly minted laws, anomalies are now seen to have enjoyed a vogue during the early modern period. They were multiplied, even produced, by lively theological and philosophical controversies about the allocation of phenomena and by associated conflicts of power and interest. But, at the same time, they became valued for their capacity to reveal unseen aspects of nature and force reconceptualizations and reclassifications of natural knowledge. Recognizable in all this, in fact, are many of the features of Thomas Kuhn’s classic depiction of the role of anomaly in periods both before and between the imposition of scientific paradigms. It becomes possible, then, to visualize the natural philosophy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as in that state of uncertainty and internal rivalry but also theoretical fecundity and innovation that characterizes ‘revolutionary’ scientific development. This will enable us to take advantage of the recent shifts in historical perspective already outlined. It accounts, in particular, for the fact that early modern scholars seemed to have struggled not only over the intellectual and institutional configuration of individual disciplines but over the very languages of enquiry—in particular, what it meant, and in whose interests it was, to talk in terms of the ‘supernatural’, the ‘preternatural’, and the ‘natural’. And it explains the popularity of demonology—the study of anomalies *par excellence*—as a vehicle for conceptual and empirical puzzle-solving.

Ultimately, however, this sort of reassessment is only possible because of the shift from a less realist to a more relativist view of the history of science that has also occurred in recent decades. As long as historians of the scientific revolution were committed philosophically to the model of knowledge I outlined at the start of this book, they, like similar interpreters of witchcraft beliefs, could only judge past reality-apportioning statements in the same way that they judged present ones—in terms of their accuracy in corresponding to or mirroring objective natural conditions. Hence, inescapably, the view that pre-modern scientific notions were faulty when compared to more up-to-date evidence and should be attributed to forms of ignorance not forms of knowledge. Conversely, some kind of relativism in making

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[19] Charles B. Schmitt,//rijtof/r *and the Renaissance* (London, 1983), 27, see also 2,4.

historical judgements about scientific truths became inevitable once historians thought it worth while to look more closely at these faulty notions and found that they were known with as much confidence and defended with as much tenacity as any scientific community has been able to muster in a time of radical change. Needless to say, considerable theoretical support for the contextualizing of scientific truths has also come from sociologists and philosophers of science. They have familiarized us with the idea that such truths, like any other cultural artefacts, are not so much discovered as made (theories about them being radically underdetermined by data from the real world), that they therefore depend on the conditions of knowledge and practice which contingently obtain in different scientific communities at different times, and that they cannot, in consequence, be held up for comparison with each other according to some absolute, context-free standard. Examples from the whole past of science have seemed further to confirm this, and a fruitful interplay has come to exist between historical and theoretical forms of relativism, together with continuing controversy over the principle itself.[20] In the end, the controversy seems unresolvable. The stubborn fact that there have been many very different ways of talking about natural reality in the past means that, on realist grounds, they cannot all have been right; whereas, for equally stubborn reasons, historians of science have no terrain, except the (understandably necessary) realism of the scientific language of their own day, for saying that any of them was wrong.

To save their judgements from anachronism (and their daily lives from chaos) seems to mean adopting the kind of 'two-tier-thinking' that was also acknowledged at the opening of Part I. Indeed, in what follows I shall proceed very much in terms of the arguments established there. After all, scientific reference to the external world is, like any other kind of reference, only ever possible within languages, where it succeeds or fails according to relations of difference between signs. Some of the most interesting recent work on the contingency of scientific truths ties this characteristic to their rhetorical and literary dimensions, understood in the widest sense.[21] I shall therefore focus on the senses in which the actions of devils and witches were real (or unreal) to those who argued about them, and pay no attention to whether they were real (or unreal) in any other sense or whether the arguments were adequate or inadequate in grasping nature.[22] My subject initially will be the categories and classifications actually used (and contested), and the problems of analysis actually encountered by contemporaries of the witchcraft prosecutions when discussing the physical possibility of demonism—its status, we might neutrally say, as a phenomenon. Later the emphasis will be on the interrelationship between demonology and the disputes and uncertainties that marked early modern natural philosophy in its broader forms. Here I focus on the intellectual work achieved by thinkers with demons in the area of posing and solving scientific puzzles. The aim throughout is to rescue these topics from neglect or misinterpretation by paying attention to the terms in which they were originally discussed—that is to say, by treating them symmetrically with other items of early modern cultural history.[23] It will eventually become clear, above all, that I use words like 'magic' and 'occult' as a matter of report when discussing the sorts of things that counted as 'magical' or 'occult' in early modern Europe, and the reasons for so designating them. For the moment, it should be stressed that no other sense whatever is intended.[24] In the main, I wish to combat the modern conceit that early modern intellectuals attributed effects to devils only so long as their true causes were unknown to them and that the only story worth telling about these attributions concerns their overthrow. On the contrary, to attribute effects to devils *was* to know their causes—to know them perhaps uncertainly and fragmentally (for such was the problem with occult causes), but still to know them. Thoroughgoing scepticism, when it finally came, was not a victory of knowledge over ignorance but a corollary of knowing nature according to different rules. Until that point came, demonology' worked as well as any other branch of physics—and it therefore seems important to find out how this was so.

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[20] For some revealing examples from modern history of the theory-laden nature of scientific facts, see Steven Shapin, 'History of Science and its Sociological Reconstructions',//«/. Snrwrr, 20 (1982), 157-64; cf. the essays in Barry Barnes and Steven Shapin (eds.), *Natural Order: Historical Studies of Scientific u-/wr* (London, 1979).

[21] Maurice Slawinski, 'Rhetoric and Science/Rhetoric of Science/Rhetoric as Science in Stephen Pumfrey, Paolo L. Rossi, and id. (eds.), *Science, Culture and Popular Belief in Renaissance Europe* (Manchester, 1991), 71-99; and see esp. the essays in John A. Schuster and Richard R. Yeo (eds.), *The Politics and Rhetoric of Scientific Method* (Dordrecht, 1986); Andrew E. Benjamin, G. N. Cantor, and JR R. Christie (eds.), *The Figural and the Literal: Problems of Language tn the History of Science and Philosophy 1630-1800* (Manchester, 1987); Peter Dear (ed.), *The Literary Structure of Scientific Argument* Historical *Studies* (London, 1991); and J. Mali and G. Motzkin (eds.), special issue of *Science in Context,* 7 (1994), devoted to 'Narrative Patterns in Scientific Disciplines.'

[22] In this I follow Peter Dear, *Mersenne and the Learning of the Schools* (London, 1988), 235-6, on the

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irrelevance of sanctioning (say) Galileo's knowledge claims as true to a historical understanding of their nature and origins. Dear says: 'Only a historical actor's claims or beliefs, not their validity, can properly play a part in the historian's accounts.'

[23] I borrow this application of the notion of symmetry from Barnes and Shapin (eds.), *Natural OrJer,* 11.

[24] I follow Simon Schaffer when he says that to understand 'the actual categories of theoccult is... to understand how philosophers of nature could safely but effectively describe the world and the means of access to that world.': id., 'Occultism and Reason', in Holland (cd.), *Philosophy,* 118.

11

The Devil in Nature

> Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?
>
> (Exodus 15:11)

> Our Definers of Witch-craft dispute much, whether the Devill can worke a Miracle, they resolve he can do a wonder, but not a Miracle, Mirum but not Miraculum.
>
> ([Robert Filmer], *Advertisement to the jurymen of England)*

> We have said that even the devil can do nothing above the powers of nature.
>
> (Thomas Erastus, *Deux Dialogues)*

In early modern Europe devils were allowed enormous intellectual and physical powers.[1] Theology told of an original fall from divine favour that nevertheless left their other angelic advantages more or less intact. They retained the subtlety and acuity of spirits, they continued to draw on their experience since the creation, and they could still act with extraordinary strength and speed. The devil, wrote William Perkins, could 'search more deeply and narrowly into the grounds of things, then all corporall creatures that are clothed with flesh and blood'. He was also 'an auncient Spirit, whose skil hath beene confirmed ... for the space almost of sixe thousand yeares.' His physical might was, if anything, increased by his new-found malice, and his quickness and agility were entirely beyond the 'grosse' natures of mortals.[2] * The Andalusian preacher and Augustine prior Pedro de Valderrama likewise insisted that the capabilities of the very least of the infernal spirits far surpassed those of the most gifted man? Devoid of grace, their access to spiritual truths had, of course, been entirely removed. But, in the general view, everything else they had known before sinning was, unless it rivalled divine omniscience itself, still available to them—even if a little more obscurely? Eventually, when the 'new philosophy' began to establish itself in England, it even became possible to describe Satan as great in ‘Experimental Knowledge’.[5]

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[1] More than most topics in demonology, these were the subject of so many uniform discussions that almost any citation is representative. In addition to the texts drawn on in this chapter, there are standard treatments in Da Prierio, *De strigimagarum,* 8-126; Wilhelm Adolf Scribonius [Schreiber], *De sagarum natura etpotestate* (Marburg, 1588), fos. 35-92'; Samson, *Neun ... Hexen Predigt,* sigs. Fii'-Hii'; Elich, *Daemonomagia,* 76-121; Benedictus Pcrcrius, *Adversus fallaces et superstitiosas artes, id est, de magia, de observatione somniorum, et, de divinatione astrologica* (Ingolstadt, 1591), 32-52. For a version that reached English readers of trial pamphlets, see [H.F.J.zf *true and exact relation of the severall informations, examinations, and confessions of the late witches, arraigned and executed in the county of Essex* (London, 1645), 'Preface to the Reader'.

[2] Perkins, *Discourse,* 19-21. J Valderrama, *Histoiregenerale,* bk. 3,17-19.

[4] Zanchy, *De operibus Dei,* col. 177; Otto Casmann, *Angelographia* (Frankfurt, 1597), 421-8.

Many remarked on the fact that for the Ancients the very name ‘daemon’ signified ‘knowing’. The devil, said Bullinger, ‘hath hys name of sundry knowledge, and skilfulnes of thinges’.[6] This inevitably made him formidable in the sphere of action too. Johann Weyer, whose scepticism concerning witchcraft was (as we shall see) made possible by his orthodoxy in demonology, summarized the usual view. The devil’s angelic essence was only impaired, not destroyed, by his fall, and he had continued to acquire a profound knowledge of things and a marvellous facility in using them: ‘all are agreed that he possesses great energy, incredible cunning, superhuman wisdom, the keenest discernment, the highest degree of alertness, and incomparable skill in contriving the most destructive stratagems under the most attractive guise... that he often produces wondrous effects on this account.’[7]

At the same time, and for the same reasons, the powers of devils were ultimately circumscribed. Without omniscience, they could not, for example, know the exact course of future events or the contents of the human will. Without grace, their abilities to understand and execute were natural abilities, exercised entirely within the domain of created nature. When the Somerset minister William Sclater wrote, ‘Philosopher is none amongst men, so exact as the di veil’, what he meant to convey was a pre-eminence in natural science.[8] * And when the German angelographer Otto Casmann spoke of the ‘sublime’ knowledge of devils he clearly meant their grasp of the natural order; ‘they seem to know the natural forms and physical properties of things, even though the good angels understand everything more completely.” Like others, Casmann repeated Paolo Grillando’s remark that the devil knew more about natural things than all the men in the world put together; Grillando himself reported that devils knew the properties and powers of all the elements, metals, stones, herbs, plants, reptiles, birds, fish, and heavenly bodies, and that theologians called the devil ‘the best philosopher, theologian, arithmetician, mathematician, dialectician, logician, grammarian, and musician, and the most excellent physician.’[10] To two other Germans, Paulus Frisius and Johann Ellinger, he was ‘mighty in physics and in the skills of nature’, a ‘well-versed and highly skilful empiric and practitioner ... an excellent student of physics, astronomy, and mathematics.’[11] According to a French

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[5] R[icha rd] G[il pin J, *Daemonologia sacra: or, a treatise of Sa tans temptations* (London, 1677), pt. 1,23-

[6] Heinrich Bullinger, *A hundred sermons upon the Apocalips of Jesu Christe, trans. John* Daws (London, 1561), 226; cf. Maldonado, *Traictedes anges et demons,* fo. 160'; Petrus Martyr [Vcrmigli], ‘Sommairedes trois questions proposces ct resolues par M. Pierre Martyr’, in Ludwig Lavater, *Trois Livres des apparitions* ([Geneva], 1571), 251, 267 (a translation of sections of Martyr’s Latin commentary on 1 Samuel); Rheynmannus, *Christ licit und nothwendig gesprach,* 106; Francois Perrault, *Demonologie,* 2nd cdn. (Geneva, 1656), 64 (first pub. 1653).

[7] Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum,* 31, see also 26.

* William Sclater, *A briefe exposition with notes upon the second epistle to the Thessalonians,* 2nd cdn. (I^ondon, 1629), 149.

’ Casmann, *Angelographia,* 429.

[10] Grillando, *Tractatus de sortilegiis,* in *Malleus maleftcarum* (1669 edn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 2), 246,250.

[11] Paulus Frisius, *Von dess Teujfels Nebelkappen, Das ist: Ein kurtzer Begrijf dengantzen handel von it’*

Catholic theologian, ‘there was nothing in nature of which Satan did not know perfectly all the properties, and in what place it could be found.’[12] Perrault, the Huguenot writer on demonology, called him simply a great ‘naturalist’.[12] To Perkins, he had ‘great understanding, knowledge, and capacitie in all naturall things, of what sort, qualitic, and condition soever, whether they be causes or effects, whether of a simple or mixt nature’.[14] The Dane Niels Hemmingsen wrote simply that evil spirits were ‘the most diligent observers of natural causes and effects.’[15] And in Sweden, in the later seventeenth century, it was again said of evil spirits that they

> know the nature of material things better than the deepest Philosophers, and understand better, how things are joined, and compounded, and what the Ingredients of terrestrial Productions are, and see things (grosser things at least) in their first principles, and have power over the Air, and other Elements, and have a thousand ways of shaping things and representing them to the external Senses.[16]

These various remarks were typical of European demonology. They testify to the universal assumption that, cut off from divine revelation, the demonic intellect could only be exercised by the light of nature.

In the sphere of demonic action, the sense of restriction within the boundaries of natural causation is just as emphatic. Of course, devils could achieve many real effects that were beyond human ability. Their power over sublunary bodies was so great that they could move them at will, afflict them with diseases and other evils, and set up occupation in them. Casmann listed eight areas where they acted directly on the world: in producing disorders of the weather, moving objects from place to place (often so quickly that they appeared to become invisible), making statues move and animals speak like men, distorting the ordinary motions of things, assuming various shapes, disturbing bodily humours and vital spirits, presenting objects to the imagination in dreams, and affecting human senses and emotions. In addition, devils could take advantage of their superb knowledge to act indirectly on things by manipulating their ordinary workings.[17]

But despite the sheer extent and variety of their powers, devils ultimately obeyed the laws of nature. ‘Sathan can doo nothing’, wrote Lambert Daneau, ‘but by naturall meanes, and causes ... As for any other thing, or that is of more force, hee can

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Zauberey belangend, zusammengelesen (1583), in *Theatrum de venejicium,* 219; Johann Ellinger, *Hexen Coppel; das ist, Uhralte AnkunJJt undgrosse ZunJJi des unholdseligen Unholden oder Hexen, welche in einer Coppel von einem gantzen Dutzet auffdie Schaw undMusterundgefiihret* (Frankfurt/Main, 1629), 18. For a study of Frisius, sec Charles Zika, ‘The Devil’s Hoodwink: Seeing and Believing in the World of Sixteenth-Century Witchcraft’, in id. (ed.), *No Gods Except Me: Orthodoxy and Religious Practice in Europe, 1200-1600(Ntebcnmc,* 1991), 153-98.

[12] Valladier, *Sainctephilosophic,* 632. ” Perrault, *Demonologie,* 76.

[14] Perkins, *Discourse,* 19. [11] Hemmingsen, zh/rnonmo, sig. G 5’.

[14] Anthony Homeck, ‘An account of what happen’d in the kingdom of Sweden ... in relation to some persons that were accused for witches’ (1688), in Glanvill, *Saducismus tnumphatus,* 573.

[17] Casmann, *Ange lograp hia,* 542-3 and 542-77 *passim;* cf. Zanchy, *De operibus Dei,* cols. 184—8; Martyr, ‘Sommaire des trois questions’, 281-91; Raffaele Della Torre, *Tractatus de potestate daemonum de magorum ad effect us mirabiles et prodigiosos,* in *Diversi tractatus de potestate ecclesiastica coercendi daemones circa energumenos et maleficiatos,* ed. and pub. Constantin Munich (Cologne, 1629), 199-202.

not doe it.’[18] It was insisted that demonic effects were usually either forms of local motion or alterations wrought by the fit application of actives on passives. Both types of operation could be interfered with in secondary ways; they might, for example, be suddenly interrupted or enormously accelerated. Alphonsus de Spina said that what nature took a month to do, the devil could achieve in an instant.” But the natural principles on which he depended remained inviolate. Satan could meddle with the initial specific conditions of natural events, but he could never dispense with the general laws governing their occurrence. This is why Pierre Crespet could admit that devils only performed truly the sorts of things that might arise from the natural order itself.[20] In this respect, he and his fellow authors were only saying of demonic agency what a natural philosopher like Bacon said of human—that nature governed everything.[21]

The essential and incontestable point was that only the creator of nature could break its rules; the devil was as necessarily bound by them as any other creature. God had given everything in the creation specific capacities to promote or undergo change according to its nature, ‘the which it is not possible for any creature in the world to alter, or change, but only for the creator’.[22] Theological propriety alone ruled this out, but it was also philosophically nonsensical to suppose that the behaviour of things might go beyond the created qualities that made them what they were. This placed absolute theoretical limits on both the scope of agents and the potentialities by which they acted. Neither men and women nor angels and devils could achieve anything except by natural means, however enhanced; what they did was either natural, asserted the Spaniard Francesco de Osuna, or it was spurious.[23] These strictures, found everywhere in the literature, are best expressed by the English physician, John Cotta. The devil’s special skills as a spirit often took him beyond the ordinary course of natural processes and enabled him to achieve results that W’ould not normally have occurred and by causes that seemed unintelligible:

> yet doth hec not, nor is able to rule or commaund over generall Nature, or infringe or alter her inviolable decrees in the perpetuall and never-interrupted order of all generations; neither is he generally Master of universal! Nature, but Nature Master and Commaunder of him. For

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[11] Dancau, *Dialogue of witches,* sig. lii*.

” Spina, *Fortalitiumfidei,* sig. Liu’; cf. G[ilpin], *Daemonologia sacra,* pt. 1,36.

“ Crespet, *Deux Livres,* fo. 111'"’; cf. Johannes Geiler von Kaisersbcrg, *Die emeis... Undgibl underweisung von den unholden oderhexen* (Strasburg, 1517), fo. xliii'; André Valladier, *Les Divines Paralleles de la saincte eucharistie* (Paris, 1613), 191; Erastus, *Deux Dialogues,* 408.

[21] Cf. *Bicon, De augmenliis,* in *Works,* iv. 294-5: ‘man has no power over nature except that of motion; he can put natural bodies together, and he can separate them; and therefore ... wherever the case admits of the uniting or disuniting of natural bodies, by joining (as they say) actives with passives, man can do everything; where the case does not admit this, he can do nothing.’

[22] Mason, *Anatomie of sorcerie,* 17-18; cf. Perrault, *Demonologie,* 117, who called this ‘le [rtr] limite de nature’.

[21] Francesco de Osuna, *Flagellum diaholi; oder. Dess Teufels Gaissl. Darinn ... gehandlet wirt: Von der Machtund Gewalt dess biisen Feindts. Von den Effectenund U'irckungen der Zauberer, Unholdter und llexcnmaister,* trans, from Spanish by Egidius Albertinus (Munich, 1602), fos. 7’—10'; cf. Mason, *Anatomic of sorcery,* 18.

> Nature is nothing else but the ordinary power of God in al things created, among which the Divell being a creature, is contained, and therefore subject to that universall power.[24]

The universally adopted ontological framework for establishing these arguments was the attempt (following Aquinas) to distinguish wonders from miracles. With their slower wits and weaker technical skills, ordinary men and women (it was said) were easily dazzled by demonic effects and inclined to think of them as supernatural—with dangerously Manichaeistic side-effects. ‘Demons can do only what their natural powers extend to and what God permits’, explained Grillando, ‘but their powers are so great in the compounding of natural things that men who see what they do mistakenly take them for miracles.’[25] However, since supernatural acts must, by definition, be altogether beyond nature’s limits, they could only be achieved by the creator. Demonic operations must, in consequence, exist within nature, with only human ignorance preventing them from being fully intelligible. Miracles were, in principle, unknowable, whereas all natural phenomena might be understood if men and women were as clever as devils. What the latter achieved were wonders—*mira* rather than *miracula*—and it was the task of intellectuals, armed with natural philosophical expertise, to reduce the intelligibility gap by pointing this out and showing how they were caused. Zanchy wrote that, just as astronomers gave natural accounts of solar eclipses, so theologians could provide the same for demonic phenomena, both of which simple peasants saw as miracles.[26]

Whatever else writers on demonism and witchcraft were doing, then, they were also engaged in a task of scientific demystification. And what devils could not do was, in the end, of more significance than what they could. To his list of *actiones immediatae* Otto Casmann added three areas of impossibility. Devils could not overturn the universal order of things; they could not destroy any of the world’s essential features, stop or reverse the motion of the heavens, or carry off the elements from their allotted natural locations; and they could not break the fundamental laws of physics by situating two or more bodies in the same physical space or one object in several places, or by moving objects from place to place without traversing the intermediate spaces. In the sphere of *actiones mediatae* devils were unable to produce any substantial form, create anything from nothing, make anything out of anything else, produce any effect they pleased from any cause or by any instrument, transform any natural thing into any other, or produce perfect living beings without seed. Casmann’s catalogue is utterly typical of demonological opinion, both Protestant and Catholic, and was repeated many times.[27] Zanchy likewise spoke of devils being able to alter the qualities of bodies but not their substance.[23] Other writers underlined the distance between *rnira* and *miracula* by denying devils the power to reproduce specific miracles, above all, the raising of the dead.

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[24] John Cotta, *The triall of witch-craft* (London, 1616), 34.

[25] Grillando, *Tractatus de sortilegiis*, in *Malleus maleficarum* (1669 edn.), ii (vol. 2, pt. 2), 263.

[26] Zanchy, *De operibus Dei*, cols. 191-5; cf. Casmann, *Angelographia*, 208-43; René Benoist, *Traicté enseignant en bref les causes des malefices, sortileges et enchanteries, tant des ligatures et noeuds d'esguillettes pour empescher l'action et exercice du mariage* (1579), in Masse, *De l'imposture* 216-17. Commentary on this point in Kocher, *Science and Religion*, 121-7. John L. Teall, ‘Witchcraft and Calvinism in Elizabethan England: Divine Power and Human Agency’, *J. Hist. Ideas*, 23 (1962), 23, says that there was ‘unanimous agreement’ on the difference between demonic *mira* and divine *miracula*.

[27] For typical Catholic versions, see Spina, *Fortalitium fidei*, sig. Liii^v (calling these things repugnant

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These exclusions completed the account of demonic agency on, so to speak, first principles. And if the discussion had stopped here witchcraft theory would have been a relatively straightforward matter of bringing the truths of theology and the laws of nature to the investigation of malicious but real actions. But two other factors also had to be considered. Neither of them changed the situation in any fundamental way but each made it very much more complicated.

First, the devil was also allowed enormous skills as a deceiver—and this in physical and not merely ethical terms. Where his power to produce real effects gave out—where he came up against the ultimate boundaries of nature—his ingenuity in camouflaging his limitations took over. In consequence, he was credited with a wide range of illusory phenomena. He could corrupt external perception, persuading his victims (as Theodor Thumm said) ‘to hear, sense, see, and touch’ things that, in truth, were only appearances presented to their deluded senses.[29] Castancga explained how, for example, he could cause visible rays ‘to become tied up in such a way that they represent the figure he desires; or he can divert the rays so they don’t go straight to the eyes looking at it’.[30] According to others, he could displace one object with another so quickly that transmutation appeared to occur, present illusory objects to the senses by influencing the air or wrapping fantastic shapes around real bodies, and, at the same time, delude all the third parties involved so that no contradictory’ testimony was available. Alternatively, he could charm the internal faculties of human understanding with ‘ecstasies’ or ‘frenzies’.[31] In short, he could make men and women ‘believe that that which is not, is, and imagine that which is, to be something else’.[32] None of this compromised the original principle, since deception too was reduced to local motion and secondary causes. ‘Even this’, said Henri Boguet, ‘he contrives by natural means.’[33] But it did make demonology' as much an exercise in epistemology and ontology as in theology and morality. Despite the limitations

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to natural philosophy’); Della Torre, *Tractatus de potestate daemonum,* 202-8; *TonManca, Daemonologb,* 218-20.

“ Zanchy, *De operibus Dei,* cols. 184-8.

[n] Theodor Thumm, *Tractatustheologicus, de sagarum impietate, nocendiimbecillitateetpoenae gravitate* (Tübingen, 1621), 28 (a disputation, with Simon Peter Werlin as respondent).

[w] Castaflega, *Tratado,* 306.

[11] Martyr, ‘Sommaire des trois questions’, 292-5; Antoine de Morry, *Discoursd’un miracle avenuenb basse Normandie. Avec un traitedes miracles, du pouvoirdes demons, et de leursprestiges, et le moyen de les reco{-noistred'avecles vrays miracles* (Paris, 1598), 38-66; Andreas Gerhard [Hyperius], ‘Whether that the devils have bene the showers of magicall artes’, in *Two commonplaces taken out of Andreas Hyperius,* trans. R-V (London, 1581); Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum,* 9; Zanchy, *De operibus Dei,* cols. 189-91; Valladier. *Saincte philosophic,* 627-31; Torreblanca, *Daemonologia,* 236—40; Della Torre, *Tractates de potestate dotmonum,* 212-28.

“ Thumm, *Tractatus theologicus,* 28.

” Boguet, *Examen of witches,* p. xliii; cf. Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum,* 189, Thumm, *Tractates theologicus,* 28.

placed on the devil's capacity to produce real effects, there was nothing that he might not appear to effect, and nobody but the experts in demonology to tell the difference. It was 'a very hard task', admitted Meric Casaubon, 'to distinguish between the reality of that which he cannot [do], and the resemblance, which he doth offer unto our eyes.'[34] Authors therefore went to considerable lengths to expose Satan's 'lying wonders' and distinguish them from the real ones. Had they not done so the status of miracles and 'providences', and with it the credentials of religious belief, would have been utterly uncertain. But so too, on the other side, would have been the predictability of natural events and the reliability of the ways of perceiving them—in short, the foundations of natural philosophical enquiry.

In the second place, nature itself could both astonish with real wonders and deceive with false ones, as well as affording a basis for the wonders wrought by human artifice. 'For wonderful and terrible and amazing things happen owing to natural forces,' conceded the authors of *Malleus maleficarum*.[35] Natural prodigies offered independent evidence for those marvellous properties of created things on which devils themselves relied in the production of *mira.* Here too there were potential confusions for the ignorant and unwary. The two categories of event were, in any case, equivalent in terms of their formal and material causes, and if the devil chose to take advantage of natural wonders, their efficient causes could become fused too. It only needed the element of divine punishment in those of a kind harmful to humans to implicate him in their final causes as well. In these circumstances, it was impossible, in principle, to give a satisfactory account of demonism without a thorough knowledge of natural philosophy in some of its most esoteric branches. Deception too could be the product of unaided nature, rather than of demonic intrusions—and, again, it could be the product of both together. Natural conditions, especially diseases, could easily affect the senses and yield dreams, visions, and hallucinations that compromised the understanding of reality. A decision on the devil's part to intrude his own illusions at this point—the case most discussed by Johann Weyer—therefore produced the same difficulties as with natural wonders. In sum, writers on demonology had to explain not one but four categories of extraordinary events; real demonic effects, illusory demonic effects, real non-demonic effects, and illusory non-demonic effects. And among the non-demonic, they had to allow for both the spontaneous workings of nature and those produced by human ingenuity. It was somewhere on the resulting grid of explanations that the phenomena of magic and witchcraft had to be distributed.

* * *

How this was achieved, and with what implications for both the long-term stability of demonological beliefs and their relations with early modern natural philosophy, are matters for subsequent chapters. But it is worth pausing here over the classifications I have been summarizing, since, in themselves, they say something important both about the intellectual character of witchcraft beliefs and about the way we look back on them from beyond the coming of modern science. At the very least, we cannot go on associating them with supernaturalism or calling demonology an 'occult science'—if by 'occult' we mean something to do with knowledge and use of the supernatural. For one of the principal aims of demonological enquiry was precisely that of establishing what was supernatural and what was not; and there was scarcely an author who did not state categorically that demonism was an aspect of the natural world. The devil lacked just those powers to overrule the laws of nature that constituted truly miraculous agency. Whatever the scale of his intervention, it could never, therefore, turn natural into supernatural causation. In early modern Europe, there may well have been a pervasive supernaturalism in the general conceptions of witchcraft held by ordinary' people. In this respect, scholarly writers on the subject were correcting what they saw as a popular error—battling, in particular, against a form of Manichaeism. But their texts should not be the subject of modern misunderstandings as well. The devil who appeared in them was never, ultimately, what he has become for us—a figure beyond nature. 'His power', wrote Valderrama, 'in no way surpasses that of nature.' Even his greatest masterpieces, emphasized Paulus Frisius, 'must be placed within physics and within nature, not above it, for only the Lord God can alter nature, and work anything against its course, not the devil, who works according to nature, not against it.'[36]

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[34] Casaubon, *Treatise proving spirits, witches and supernatural operations,* 157.

[35] [Kramer and Sprenger], *Malleus maleficarum,* 57.

It is important to insist on this principle even against apparently contradictory evidence. For very often, in the literature of witchcraft, effects were indeed labelled 'unnatural' or said to be not attributable to 'natural causes'. The devil was frequently described as acting in a 'supernatural' capacity, as in Richard Bernard's remark that it was difficult to distinguish 'betweene some diseases naturall, and those that bee really and truely supernaturall comming by the Divell and Witchery'.[37] It is even the case that authors appeared to talk of demonic miracles. Jacob Heerbrand of Tübingen, for example, defined a miracle as acted 'against and above the usual order of nature ... instituted by God' before going on to allow for divine *and diabolical* versions. George Hallywcll spoke of real miracles being produced by demonic magic. To ignore such cases (and there are many others) might seem a dubious way of saving the consistency of a theory.[38]

Nevertheless, theoretical propriety was paramount; more important, to be sure, than linguistic propriety. There was simply no place in Christian theology and natural philosophy for a devil who might challenge the fundamental order of things

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[54] Valderrama, *Histoire generate,* bk. 3, 263; Frisius, Fon *dess Teujfels Nebelkappen,* 221; of. Holland. *Treatise against witchcraft,* sigs. C2”, El'; Raemond, *L'Antichrist,* 406; Henry More, *An antidote against atlieisme, or an appeal to the naturalfaculties of the ininde of man, whether there be not a God* (London, 1653). 163.

” Bernard, *Guide to grand-jury men,* 25; cf. Edward Fairfax, *Daemonologia: A discourse on witchcraft as it was acted in the family of* /Mr. *Edward Fairfax, of Fuyston, in the county of York, in the year 1621* (Harrogate, 1882), 36.

” Jacob Heerbrand, *praeses* (Caspar Arcularius, *respondent), De niiraculis. Disputalio ex cap.* 7. *Ex^* (Tübingen, 1571), 1; Hallywcll, *Melampronoea,* 84-5.

Lambert Daneau conceded that the Bible itself used the term ‘miracle’ to indicate anything unusual to men, ‘although it proceede from naturall meanes and causes’, but Thomas Ady was, nevertheless, sure that ‘we never read in the Scriptures that the Devil may have any supernatural power ascribed to him’.[39] The letter of apparently contradictory formulations can, therefore, be regarded as less significant than the spirit in which demonology was argued out—as an exercise in demystification. In fact, context invariably supports this. By talking about ‘unnatural’ or ‘supernatural’ elements in magic and witchcraft, authors—when they were referring to real events—were usually drawing attention to two relativities, one causal and the other cognitive. First, real demonic activity went beyond what would normally have been expected from the ordinary flow of natural effects from natural causes—from what Bacon called nature when ‘she is free, and develops herself in her own ordinary course’.[40] In this limited sense, it could be construed as surpassing or exceeding nature; that is to say, ‘ordinary nature’ (a phrase also often used in texts) rather than nature *simpliciter.* In *Malleus tnaleficarum,* the works of witches were said to be ‘outside the common course and order of nature’.[41] Of angels, good and bad, Comenius wrote that ‘whensoever the course of nature is to be hindered, or anything is to be wrought beyond the ordinary order of nature, God useth their assistence.’[42]

Secondly, real demonic activity was also strange to human understanding and, therefore, seemed impossible in relation to the nature known to men, and practised on by them. As William Perkins said, demonic effects not only transcended the ‘ordinarie bounds and precincts of nature’ but rested on a knowledge that went ‘many degrees beyond the skill of all men, yea even of those that are most excellent in this kind, as Philosophers, and Physicians’.[43] But implicit in this whole intellectual enterprise was the assumption that, in principle, only relative ignorance and incapacity separated men from devils. According to Sebastien Michaëlis, oracles were only deified by the ancient peoples because of their success in using demonic skills to conjecture the outcome of natural events, and were subsequently exposed when human knowledge of natural causes reached a comparable standard.[44] Sorcerers (with devils’ help) cured diseases that were beyond the skills of physicians, argued James Mason, ‘and yet for all that the disease by man (if hee could hitte upon the right methode) and that by naturall meanes, not incurable’.[45] John Gaule was yet more explicit: devils did everything via natural actives and passives, ‘which if wee were as cunning in as they; we might also doc without them, and need never be beholding to them’. This is an admission with obvious implications for the relative success, in accounting for strange phenomena, of explanations that allowed for demonic agency and those that did not—implications to which we must eventually return. The important point at the moment is, as Gaule went on to say, that the contingency of ignorance could not conceivably have been extended to supernature proper. Mjr. acles, he wrote, were ‘as strange and as admirable to [devils], as they are to us’.[45]

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[39] Daneau, *Dialogue of witches,* sig. Iii i^{r}; Ady, *Candle in the dark,* 31.

[40] Bacon, *Parasceve ad historiam naturalem el experimentalem,* in *Works,* iv. 253 (Latin, i. 395).

[41] [Krämer and Sprenger], *Malleus maleficarum,* 102.

[42] Comenius, *Naturallphilosophic,* 235; cf. Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus,* 67,294.

[41] Perkins, *Discourse,* 159, 59; cf. [Krämer and Sprenger], *Malleus maleficarum,* 105, and Casaubon, *Treatise proving spirits, witches and supernatural operations,* 5-6, making a distinction between ‘ordinary nature’ and ‘natural in the latitude of the notion ... though to us unknown’.

[44] Michaëlis, *Discourse of spirits,* 60.

[45] Mason, *Anatomic of sorcerie,* 38.

It remains true, of course, that when the texts spoke of demonic effects considered to be unreal, the term ‘unnatural’ had the broader meaning of surpassing nature altogether. But here the issue was inefficacy, not efficacy, with the ultimate criterion of what was possible in nature brought in to establish what devils and witches might fail to do in reality and succeed in doing only in appearance. Hence the suggestion that the debate on witchcraft was not concerned with a conflict between nature and the supernatural, but with ‘le mode de verite de l’illusion’.[47] In all lines of argument, then, the connotation of the terms used was not that demonism was in fact supernatural but only that it was *extraordinary.* Henry More’s definition of a witch or wizard was, accordingly, ‘one that has the knowledge or skill of doing or telling things in an extraordinary way’.[48] That there is a danger here of pre-empting meanings by thinking of the ‘supernatural’ only in its modern sense is shown by the widely separated cases of the early sixteenth-century Spanish theologian Pedro Ciruelo, and the early seventeenth-century English physician John Cotta. Both repeatedly talk of‘supernatural’ causation by devils, only to deny their own terminology by eventually categorizing them as natural agents. Although, wrote Cotta,

> the Divell as a Spirit doth many things, which in respect of our nature are supernaturall, yet in respect of the power of Nature in universall, they are but naturall unto himsclfe and other Spirits, who also are a kinde of creature contained within the generall nature of things created: Opposite therefore, contrary, against or above the generall power of Nature, heecan do nothing.[4]’

Reading on into Hecrbrand’s *De miraculis,* we discover that he too re-establishes the distinction he appears at first to elide. Only God’s miracles are miracles proper; the devil’s are *mirabilia,* achieved by the manipulation of secondary causes.[50]

But if in all these cases contemporary terminology can sometimes mislead, on other occasions it proves enlightening. Perceiving precisely the relationship between demons and nature, some authors preferred terms like ‘quasi-natural’ or ‘hyperphysical’ to describe demonic activity. Del Rio reflected this more reliable usage exactly when he adopted the category of the ‘preternatural’ to account for prodigious effects that seemed supernatural or miraculous only because they were natural in a wider than familiar sense. Both the term and its meaning were familiar from man) contemporary surveys of natural philosophy and from aids to the teaching of the sub-

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[46] *Gaulc, Cases of conscience,2\%.*

[47] Michel Foucault, ‘Les Deviations religieuses et le savoir medical’, in Jacques Le Goff (cd.), *Heresitt et socie'te's dans TEuropepre-industrielle Il'-lfr siecles* (Paris, 1968), 20.

[41] In Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus,* 29.

[49] Cotta, *Triallof witch-craft,* 34; cf. Ciruelo, *Treatise,* 87-97 (see also 101 for the gloss by Pedro AniO' niojofreu).

[w] Hcerbrand, *De miraculis,* 2,4-5.

ject in schools and universities.[51] This means that Del Rio's suggestion is one that historians can adopt without being anachronistic.[51] [52]

Whatever the intricacies of its vocabulary, demonology was, therefore, a form of natural knowledge ~~to~~ be exact, a form of natural philosophy specializing in preternatural phenomena. Of course, it was undertaken by men with pre-modern ideas concerning what was possible and impossible in the natural world. In *Malleus maleficarum.* some natural harms were attributed, in the fashion of the time, to conjunctions of the heavens.[53] Wishing to compare the incredible speed of demonic operations with even the most accelerated of ordinary natural processes, Pietro Martire Vermigli (Petrus Martyr) chose the then familiar example of the toads that appeared instantaneously in the puddles left by summer rainfall. In the same vein, Philipp Ludwig Elich reported that one of the devil's skills was to reproduce 'imperfect' animals like flies, frogs, locusts, and snakes simply by speeding up the normal causes whereby they were generated from putrefaction.[54] When Niels Hemmingsen, the Danish theologian, distinguished between properly natural predictions and magical divination, he included in the *former* the forecasting of rain or drought from the flight of birds, and of storms from the state of the human body, together with the tracing of moral inclinations in physiognomy.

What is at issue here is not, therefore, a substantive view of nature but, rather, the fact that a criterion of what is natural is being deployed at all. Despite its past reputation for intellectual confusion and sensationalism, demonology rested on a sober conviction that there were, in principle, limits to nature. As Perkins again explained: 'what strange workes and wonders may be truely effected by the power of nature, (though they be not ordinarily brought to passe in the course of nature) those the devill can do, and so farre forth as the power of nature will permit, he is able to worke true wonders.' Frisius put it more succinctly: 'Everything that is natural is also possible for the devil.' Beyond nature lay only true miracles, which no one claimed devils could perform. They were bridled, in Petrus Martyr's metaphor, not just by God's will but by nature's laws. For Daneau, accordingly, the overriding criterion for judging the reality of the deeds confessed by witches was whether ‘the accomplishing and trueth therof, plainly repugneth against the course of nature.’[55]

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[51] For typical examples, Hieronymus Wildenbergius, *Totiusphilosophiae humane in trespartes, nempe in rational™, natural™, et moral™, digestio* (Basci, 1571), 143 (Thorndike, *History of Magic.* v. 153 gives an edition of 1544 and says the work was written for the new school at Thom); Gerard de Neufville, *Phystologia seu physica generalis de rerum naturalium* (Bremen, 1645), 141-6, first pub. 1613 (Thorndike, *History of Magic.* vii. 414-6, says he taught at Bremen and Heidelberg); Robert Sanderson, *Phystcae scientiae compendium* (Oxford, 1671), 8 (see Patricia Reif, 'The Textbook Tradition in Natural Philosophy, 1600-1650', Jr. *Hist. Ideas.* 30,1969, 17-32, who includes him among twenty 'most popular and influential manualists').

[52] Del Rio, *Disquisitionum magicarum.* 25. For a witch accused of causing things 'in a preternatural! way beyound the ordenary course of nature', see the case of Elizabeth Seger in *Blue Laws of New Haven Colony.* 296. For the term's use in witchcraft and related contexts, see Edward Jorden, *A briefe discourse of a disease called the suffocation of the mother (London.* 1603), sig. A3'.

[M] [Kramer and Sprcnger], *Malleus maleficarum.* 59.

[M] Martyr, 'Sommaire des trois questions', 284; Elich, *Daemonomagia.* 121-4; cf. Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum.* 28; Michaelis, *Discourse ofspirits.* 28-9. For the longevity of the belief in spontaneous generation, sec Katharine Brownell Collier, *Cosmogonies of our Fathers: Some Theories of the Seventeenth and the Eighteenth Centuries* (New York, 1934), 429.

Nor did the general application of this principle mean that individual writers on demonology always ended up locating the boundaries of nature in exactly the same place. Martyr admitted that it was ‘difficult to judge just how far the nature of things extends.’ For Robert Filmer, too, what could and could not be done by the power of nature (an issue for the ‘admirable or profound Philosopher’) was something that would have taxed Aristotle himself, yet ‘there be dayly many things found out, and dayly more may be which our Fore-fathers never knew to be possible in Nature.’[55] We shall eventually see that it was precisely the existence of uncertainty on this issue in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that made demonology both a debate within itself and a contribution to wider controversies among natural philosophers. For the moment, the question that has to be asked of it, therefore, is not the one prompted by rationalism—‘Why did intelligent men accept so much that was obviously occult or supernatural?’ It is simply the one prompted by the history of science—‘What concepts of nature did they share and how successfully did they maintain them?’ As Thomas Kuhn and others have shown, these are not matters whose rationality can be prejudged.

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Even so, demonology was not preserved as a natural science without some risk to its credibility. In fact, we seem to be faced here with instabilities reminiscent of those encountered in Part I—that is to say, strategies of argument that, even while they carried witchcraft theory successfully forward, seem simultaneously to have weakened it by a kind of internal subversion. The more the devil’s illusions were urged, for example, the more they gave rise to fundamental problems regarding perception and the identification of true phenomena. He was given so much power to deceive, so much command over the human senses, imagination, and understanding, that it is occasionally difficult to see how any real distinction between reality and illusion could have been maintained. Nicolas Remy, for instance, argued that, absurd as it was to believe that anyone could really be changed into a wolf, so well were witches endowed with the natural qualities of the animal, that their transformation differed ‘but little’ from the actuality. Elich too explained that, while the devil could not really resurrect the dead, he could intrude himself into the cadaver of a man and make it behave so exactly in the right manner that it seemed ‘to live’. Of such animated corpses, Andre Valladier allowed that ‘one could in no way recognize any difference’ between their utterances and those of living people.[57] Such admissions of a kind of

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” Perkins, *Discount,* 33; Frisius, Pon *dess Teujfels Nebelkappen,* 221; Martyr, ‘Sommaire des trois questions’, 285; Daneau, *Dialogue of witches,* sig. Gvii'; cf. Osuna, *Flagellum diaboli,* fos. 8"’; Holland, *Treatise against witchcraft,* sig. E3’; Michaelis, *Discourse of spirits,* 104; Midelfort, *Witch Hunting,* 45 (c>1' ing Tobias Lotter).

[54] Martyr, ‘Sommaire des trois questions’, 285; [Filmer], *Advertisement,* 8.

[57] Remy, *Demonolatry,* 113; Elich, *Daemonornagia,* 186, and 177-94 *passim',* Valladier, *Sainctephilo111' phie, can.*

demonic virtual reality seem to have compromised the attempt to ground the knowledge of witchcraft empirically—and, moreover, from within demonology itself. If nothing could be verified by the evidence of the senses, nothing could be falsified either, with the result that demonology risked becoming tenable only as a set of theologically warranted assertions. If verisimilitude was indistinguishable from the real thing, what was the point of making the distinction at all?

There is an analogy here between the potential for epistemological uncertainty and the crisis of confidence that eventually overtook some of the communities that experienced the traumas of severe witchcraft prosecutions. It has been argued that, once witch trials were sufficiently out of control for no one in a community to be safe from accusation, doubts about the way they were conducted could lead to their 'internal' suspension or abandonment. In such cases, a similarly critical point was reached with the realization that if all were potentially guilty, then perhaps no one was. In fact, these two kinds of radical doubt sometimes overlapped, as when the devil supposedly impersonated innocent people at the sabbat. This was a feat for which he possessed all the required powers but which left both ordinary perception and the securing of judicial verdicts in disarray. In Germany, it was seized upon by critics of witch trials like Adam Tanner, Friedrich von Spee, and Johann Matthäus Meyfart in order to show that serious miscarriages of justice could result from unsound testimony. Tanner argued that it was not only the principle of the thing that invited caution; it was the difficulty of ever deciding in particular cases whether or not impersonation had in fact occurred.[58]

We do not know whether he expressed these misgivings during the trials he witnessed, or, if so, to what effect. But during the Inquisition's investigations between 1610 and 1614 into witches among the Basque peoples of the Pyrenees, two Spanish commentators arrived at the same impasse. One was the humanist Pedro de Valencia, who, when consulted by the Spanish inquisitor-general on the subject of witchcraft, argued that popular assumptions about the delusions of the devil meant that attendance at sabbats could neither be proved nor disproved; the guilty could always exonerate themselves, while the innocent could never substantiate their alibis. The other was Alonso de Frias Salazar, who made it the epistemological centrepiece of his proposal that the enquiries in the mountains should immediately cease:

> For if we accept the truth of the semblance and metamorphosis, which the witnesses claim that the Devil has effected, the trustworthiness of the witnesses' statements has been vitiated in advance. That is to say, first [the Devil] wants to mislead us into thinking that the body of the witch, who is apparently present before the witness, is a counterfeit of the real person who has

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” Adam Tanner, *Tractatus theologicus de processu adversus crimina excepta, ac speciatim adversus crimen veneficii,* in *Diverse tractatus,* 17; cf. [Spee], *Cautio criminalis,* 331-50; Johann Matthäus Meyfart, *Die Hochwichtige Hexen-Erinnerung* (Leipzig, 1666), 227-38 (first pub. Schleusingen, 1636, as *Christliche Erinnerung, An Gewaltige Regenten und Getoissenhaffte Praedicanten, wie das abscheadiche Laster der Hexerey mil Ernst ausszurotten, aber in b'erfolgung desselbigen auJJ~Cantzeln und in Gerichtsheusern sehr bescheidentlich zu handeln sey, Vorlengsten aus hochdringenden Ursachengestellet).* Ponzinibius, *Tractatus de lamiis,* 281, also drew cautionary conclusions from this point, and for the same problem during the Salem trials, see Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana,* bk. 4,82.

gone in the meantime to attend the sabbat. Secondly, that witches can pass in front of approach the witnesses, being invisible when they thus pass through the air before them[3]?[1] both cases the witness is deprived of the ability to discern the truth, if he reliesas he ought solely on what he can perceive by his senses.”

In England, too, it came to be thought that it was demonology itself that made legal proceedings against witches, not to mention social relations in general, impossible because it prevented men and women from believing ‘their own eyes with confidence’. If things could be entirely different to what they seemed—if friends and neighbours might be devils or apparitions without any detectable difference—then (it was said), ‘we can be at the best but Scepticks, the best of us: We cannot possibly ascend higher than a Universal doubting of, and in every thing... And thus, there is nothing but deceit and cheat upon us, both within and without.’[60] Ultimately, the credibility of the gospels themselves was said to be at risk. Girolamo Cardano argued that stories about succubus devils that had supposedly real bodies which no one but their human consorts could see contradicted ‘not only the senses and natural reason, but also the authority of our Saviour. For if not only sight but also touch can be deceived in this way, then Christ’s words prove nothing against Thomas.’[61]

It seems, then, that there was always a theoretical, and sometimes a practical, danger that demonology would founder epistemologically by failing to provide any other grounds than its own authority for adopting its view of reality, rather than one that might be empirically derived. Certainly, there is a feeling that its claims could never be falsified by resort to appearances, for it was precisely these that the devil played such havoc with. Someone like Erastus might insist that it was impossible that ‘a man who has the use of his senses should believe imaginary things to be true, if the senses do not support this’.[62] But even this minimum condition could not be satisfied: the devil could always be brought in, we might say, to save the phenomena. To the historian of demonology it therefore comes as no surprise that Descartes, in presenting the most forceful case he could imagine for the uncertainty of knowledge, should have resorted to the demon hypothesis—the possibility that some *mauvais genie* might turn the knowledge of all external things into illusions and dreams, and reduce all the faculties for testing that knowledge to a state of utter fallibility. In his view, only the most all-embracing and radical form of doubt could serve as the yardstick for

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” *Second Report of Alonso de Salazar to the Inquisitor General* (Logrono, 24 Mar. 1612), para. 52, see also paras. 9,46 (I am most grateful to Gustav Henningsen for allowing me to use his English translations of the unpublished Salazar Reports); commentary in Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches’Advocate: BasfJf Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition (I609-16H)* (Reno, Nev., 1980), 314—17, and for the type of cases that prompted this view of witchcraft, 247-51, 343-4. For Pedro de Valencia and his ‘Concerning Witches’ Stories’ (20 Apr. 1611), see ibid. 6-9,442-3 n. 38, and CaroBaroja, *World of the Witches,* 180-

“ *[My], Doctrine of devils,* 84,89,91-2, see also 165; cf. id., *Candle in the dark,* 141. John Webster, 7 - *Displaying of supposed witchcraft* (London, 1677), 175-6, likewise asked the question how could a man know ‘his Father or Mother, his Brethren or Sisters, his Kinsmen or Neighbours?’ Hutchinson, *Histo-rical Essay,* sig. A4'”, and see also 77, thought that demonic invisibility might reduce the idea of the judicial alibi to ‘a mere Jest’.

“ Girolamo Cardano, *De rerum varietate,* in *Opera omnia* (10 vols.; Lyons, 1663), iii. 290-1.

“ Erastus, *Deux Dialogues,* 427.

true certainty; 'the victory of the Second Meditation', it has been said, 'required the super-Pyrrhonism of the First.' In one of the most renowned arguments in European philosophy, Descartes (as Pascal and Hume later acknowledged) based his conquest of scepticism on precisely that possibility for total deception that contemporary demonology seemed to hold out.[63] But not only did the intensity of early modern speculation on witchcraft lend general force and credibility to the expression of philosophical doubt in these terms; Descartes may have been responding, in particular, to the Loudun trials of 1634, by arguing (as Richard Popkin has suggested) that, since they raised the possibility of demonic contamination of all forms of evidence, 'whether we know it or not, we may all be victims of demonism and be unable to tell that we are victims, because of systematic delusion caused by the demonic agent.'[63]

On the other hand, we should not exaggerate these difficulties or assume that something like the Cartesian *reductio* vitiated witchcraft theory and made it altogether untenable. Here, too, one senses a latent tension rather than an open contradiction. Nor is it clear, in this instance, that self-destruction lay behind demonology's eventual decline. Its exponents would have said, as indeed critics of Descartes did say, that the ultimate Pyrrhonism of the demon-hypothesis was blasphemous. It ignored the certainty that evil spirits were always, ultimately, restrained by divine control, and that God would never allow human perception and judgement to be totally disrupted by demonic means.[65] On this matter, the views of Joseph Glanvill are especially telling, since he was both a believer in witchcraft and a leading philosophical sceptic, though not a Cartesian. Since the world was ruled by 'infinite Wisdom and Goodness', he argued, it was inconceivable that men and women should be given up to 'unavoidable deception'. Without a distinction between true and false, the gospels themselves might be read as a history of demonic imposture; in which case, there was no way of telling whether anything else could be reliably known. But:

> to say that Providence will suffer us to be deceived in things of the greatest concernment, when we use the best of our care and endeavours to prevent it, is to speak hard things of God; and in effect to affirm, That He hath nothing to do in the Government of the World ... And if the Providence and Goodness of God be not a security unto us against such Deceptions, we cannot be assured, but that we are always abused by those mischievous Agents, in the Objects of plain sense, and in all the matters of our daily Converses.[64]

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[63] Rene Descartes, *The Philosophical Works of Descartes,* trans. E. S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (2 vols.; Cambridge, 1911), i. 148-9; Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes,* rev.edn.fAsscn, 1964), 181-4, quotation at 216.

[64] Popkin, *History of Scepticism,* 185. For a defence of the reality of the Loudun possessions that refers more generally to the philosophical problems of certainty and doubt (and specifically to Pyrrhonism), see Tranquille de Saint-Rcmi, *Veritable relation desjustes procedures observees aufail de la possession des Ursulines de Loudun, etauprocés de Grandier* (Paris, 1634),21-2.

[65] For reactions to Descartes in these terms, see Popkin, *History of Scepticism,* 199–200; Michael R. [illegible] Spiller, *'Concerning Natural Experimental Philosophic': Meric Casaubon and the Royal Society* (The Hogue, 19[illegible], 6[illegible]0[illegible].

[66] *Saducismus triumphatus,* 101-2; cf. George Sinclair *Satan's invisible world discovered* (Edinburgh, 1685; facs. repr. Gainesville, Fla., 1969), 'To the Reader, p. xxm; John Darrell, *An apologie, or defence ofthe possession of William Sommers* (n.p., n.d.), fos. 12 -13 .

We shall see eventually that Glanvill was also able neatly to reverse the argument that demonology' itself issued in a scepticism that made judicial proof impossible and implied social chaos. For him, it was precisely the way that judicial proofs in witchcraft trials (like scientific findings in general) were arrived at that guaranteed the social order. In them, he wrote of the trials conducted by the Somerset JP Robert Hunt in 1657-8, were combined 'the testimony of sence, the Oaths of several credible Attestors, the nice and deliberate scruteny of quick-sighted and judicious Examiners, and the judgment of an Assize upon the whole'. If this was not enough to convince, then all security' of life and property and all talk of rights, truths, and claims was at an end, the transactions that determined them resting 'upon no greater circumstances of evidence than these'.[67]

It is difficult to see how such arguments could have failed to persuade, as long as providential theology itself survived intact, to be joined by a mitigated scepticism in natural philosophy. For the most part, therefore, the intellectual system underlying demonology' held up as the final arbiter between true and illusory phenomena in witchcraft matters. Its criteria enabled authors to preserve a particular construction of reality and to treat witches as proper objects of natural knowledge. It was in this confident spirit that Jean Bodin considered and rejected three of the most important theories of knowledge available to him—'that of Plato and Democritus that only the intellect is the judge of truth, next a crude empiricism attributed to Aristotle, and lastly the total scepticism of Pyrrho'[68]—before choosing a fourth, derived from Theophrastus, in which the 'common sense' mediated between sense data and their interpretation by the mind.[69] Pierre Le Loyer, after examining Pyrrhonism much more seriously than Bodin did, likewise concluded that spirit testimony could be reliably based on a combination of the normal operation of the senses and the critical judgement of the intellect.[70]

Moreover, if Glanvill and other 'new' scientists—committed, as they were, to the most sophisticated standards of empirical accuracy of their age—could accept 'the standing sensible Evidences' of witchcraft, we should surely hesitate before assuming that demonology rendered itself immune from empirical falsification. Glanvill was so confident that 'Eye and Ear-witnesses' could confirm the reality of the phenomena that he posited a direct relationship between the apparent improbabilities in witchcraft narratives and their actual veracity: 'The more absurd and unaccountable these actions seem,' he wrote, 'the greater confirmations are they to me of the truth of those Relations.'[71] We should also remind ourselves that the notion that substantive scientific constructions are driven by an empirically ascertained reality, rather than the other way round, has not (as we noted at the outset of Part II) gone unchallenged. To suppose that demonology was weakened by an inadequacy in matching up its theoretical requirements with the evidence of the senses may, in fact, seriously underestimate the extent to which it is theory that constructs this kind of evidence in the first place. But even if we set aside this philosophical question, there are still some pressing historical ones to consider; whether the concept of ‘empirical falsification’ was even present in the natural philosophy of witch-prosecuting Europe, and whether it was not itself under construction (and attack) during precisely the period when it is expected to have been at work destroying demonology.[72] Theologically warranted assertions may well have been much more successful than we imagine in sustaining witchcraft as a matter of fact.

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[67] [Joseph Glanvill], *A blow at modern sadducism in some philosophical considerations about a'itchcrjf* (London, 1668), 134-5. Glanvill was followed in this by G[ilpin], *Daemonologia sacra,* pt. 1, 31-2," 0 h said that to argue that all witchcraft was 'cheating' would amount to questioning 'whether we really Eat, Drink, Move, Sleep, and any thing else that we do'.

[68] Popkin, *History of Scepticism,* 84-5.

[69] Bodin, *Demonomanie,* 'Preface', sigs, i i'-ii'.

[70] Le Loyer, *Treatise ofspecters,* fos. 49'—61'; Popkin, *History of Scepticism,* 85-6.

[71] Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus,* 67,71; but on Glanvill's scepticism, see also Ch. 19 below.

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There was, however, a second and more structural weakness in demonological theory with much more significant consequences for its long-term fortunes; significant enough, in fact, to need fuller treatment in later chapters of this Part. It concerns the system for classifying all phenomena—whether true *or* false—on which the whole enterprise rested, and, in particular, the crucial dependence on the identification of preternatural causes and effects. For, given its definition, the category of preternature was sure to become unstable in early modern conditions. On one side, it was bounded by true miracles, whose very identity was made increasingly uncertain by theological dispute, rivalry between the churches, and the rewriting of ecclesiastical history. However clear in theory, the difference between mere wonders and real miracles became more and more difficult to maintain in particular cases as competing interests fought for the possession or elimination of these vital ideological resources. On the other side, preternature was marked off from ordinary nature by criteria that tied it to the decisions of the natural philosophical community—decisions that also became less and less easy to make and enforce as the pace of scientific controversy quickened and that community itself became divided.

Exponents of the classification scheme always admitted that it was open to socially variable interpretation (in effect, misinterpretation). The ‘vulgar’ and ‘ignorant’, in particular, were very likely to assign what they found strange in the world to the wrong causal category. But scholars were not expected to be as incapable of making uniform attributions as they became in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In fact, in these matters of categorization, early modern natural philosophy was never in consensus and often in turmoil. It experienced what might be called ‘frontier’ problems—problems about how to allocate phenomena lying along the increasingly contested borders between different classes of events. For all these reasons, insisting that the devil worked within nature, specifically within preternature, had the effect of building demonology on shifting sands. As we shall eventually see, it opened demonic causation to comparison with, and replacement by, the prodigious feats achieved spontaneously by natural force, or artificially by human ingenuity. It also made demonology vulnerable to those changes in scientific taste that led eventually to the downgrading of preternatural phenomena and their absorption into a single category' of natural causes and effects.

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[72] The second of these questions is, in part, the subject of Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, 1985).

Once again, however, even these more serious internal flaws should not be overstressed or demonology's decline regarded as a foregone conclusion. Describing the devil as a worker in occult causes and wonderful effects could strengthen his credibility in an age so committed to preternatural enquiry. The very existence, during much of the period, of a kind of conceptual free-for-all in natural philosophy added intellectual allure to subjects like demonology. Precisely because they existed at the borders between causal categories, studying them exposed the categorizing process itself for inspection. This remained as true for the researchers of the Royal Society as it was of earlier accounts of witchcraft theory's scientific footing. Throughout what follows, then, we must pay attention to the success of these accounts as well as the problems that eventually beset them. To begin with, it will be important to establish how resolutely (pretcr)naturalistic accounts of witchcraft could be. Only then can we appreciate what it meant to question what counted as a naturalistic account in the first place.

12

The Causes of Witchcraft

> Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city and sctteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.
>
> (Matthew 4:5)

> Now there are, in all kinds of witchcrafts... two things to consider: that is to say, nature, and what is above nature.
>
> (Jacques Grevin, *Deux Livres des venins)*

> I warned thee before to looke for no supematurall works in witchcraft.
>
> (Henry Holland, *Treatise against witchcraft)*

It would not be merely mimicking Michel Foucault to refer at this point to 'le regard demonologique'. Patients and witches are not dissimilar products of the relations of knowledge and power that (in his view) have turned human beings into objects of science. Just as the patient has appeared in various historical guises according to the conditions defining medical experience and governing its rationality in different epochs, so the witch's physical existence and powers were a function of the particular organization of nature we have just been examining. As Foucault might have said, witches became visible when the conditions governing what could be seen and described in nature changed in their structure, 'revealing through gaze and language what had previously been below and beyond their domain'.[1] They remained in view as long as the vision of witchcraft theorists continued to be directed by the perceptual codes of pre-modem natural philosophy (as well as the other configurations of knowledge and power dealt with in this book). And they were lost to sight when, in the course of the long eighteenth century, the world of objects to be known by natural philosophers was radically reconstituted.[2] Foucault's claim is that the articulation of a form of knowledge, and its objects of study are not two things but one. And this points again to the importance of the choice of classifications of strange events which (as we have just seen) determined the explanations offered by writers of demonology. This was a system of possibility and impossibility *par excellence,* and we must therefore look more closely at the way it authorized the causal knowledge of witchcraft.

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[1] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic,* trans. A. M. Sheridan (London, 1973), p. xii.

[2] What Foucault did say about witchcraft rather contradicts the use to which I am putting his *The Birth of the Clinic.* In 1970, in an interview with S. P. Rouanet and J. G. Merquior, he argued that 'the whole cultural system' of the Middle Ages meant that it was not possible for witchcraft to become an object of knowledge until, during the 16th and 17th c., it was appropriated by those who wished to explain it away, especially in medical terms, as the product of mental illness (see also Michel Foucault, 'Medecins, juges et sorciers au XVH* siicle', *Medecine de France,* 200, 1969,121-8). This rules out the (Foucauldian) case I wish to make—that demonology *itself*made witchcraft a possible object of scientific knowledge—a case which Foucault's hostility to the doctrine of the progress of reason led him to neglect as badly as those who have espoused the same doctrine. I am grateful to Laura de Mello c Sousa for help in obtaining the published interview in S. P. Rouanet *et al.* (cds.), *0 homem e o discurso: a arqueologia de Michel Foucault* (Rio de Janeiro, 1971), and to Mercedes Garcia-Arenal for translating pp. 40-1 into English. For a rare attempt to apply Foucault's ideas to witchcraft as an object of legal knowledge, see C. R. Unsworth,

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However, in tying medicine to conditions of possibility specific to epochs, Foucault was also seeking to discredit ideal accounts of its history, based, in particular, on the assumption that, with the birth of the modern clinic, medical science was at last capable of grasping sickness objectively and definitively. Freed from myth and fantasy and empowered with rational discourse, doctors (so the story ran) could now sit down at the bedsides of their patients and see and say what was really wrong with them. Medicine had become transparent, leaving historians with the task of simply recording this dawning of the truth. Apart from his irony, Foucault's response to this was twofold. He insisted, as a matter of philosophical principle, that perception is never innocent of concepts, and that these distribute what is seen and said. And he tried to show, as a matter of historical reinterpretation, that all that had happened with the coming of the clinic was a conceptual redistribution of the medical 'gaze' and its discourse.

These twin arguments have become so important in the history of science (not, of course, solely through Foucault's influence) that it is now easy to take them for granted. In their implications they coincide, for example, with both the influential Kuhnian notion of the incommensurability of scientific 'paradigms', and the principle of symmetry in historical treatments of accepted and rejected knowledge, adopted recently by Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer.[3] Yet they also bear fundamentally on the way the literature of witchcraft, like the history of medicine, has habitually been read. Triumphalist accounts of the victory of science over magic may no longer be credible, but in the history of all the so-called occult sciences, the temptation to write qualitatively about the changes wrought by the 'scientific revolution' has long persisted. The appeal to innovation and progress, the isolation of 'modernity' as a criterion of judgement, and the tracing of a radical shift from credulity and the reliance on authority to critical, independent thought—these, Charles Webster has argued, have all been typical ingredients of a view of scientific improvement that set the age of Paracelsus against the age of Newton.[4] Even the most attenuated historiographical preference for the advanced over the backward still begs the questions raised by Foucault; for, in effect, it takes scientific change at its own self-evaluation.

'Witchcraft Beliefs and Criminal Procedure in Early Modern England', in Thomas G. Watkin (ed.), *Ltf[1] Record and Historical Reality* (London, 1989), 71-98, esp. 72-3.

[1] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution!,* 2nd enlarged edn. (Chicago, 1970). 111-35,144-59,19S-204; Shapin and Schafler, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump,* 11-13 and *passim.*

[4] Webster, *Paracelsus to Nemton,* 1; but for a more optimistic account, see Peter W. G. Wright, 'On the Boundaries of Science in Seventeenth-Century England', in Everett Mendelsohn and Yehuda Elka"[1] (eds.), *Sciences and Cultures: Anthropological and Historical Studies of the Sciences* (Dordrecht, 1981). 77-100.

The effects on interpretations of demonology, in particular, have been deep and sustained.[5] At the level of judgements about its overall rationality it has been impossible for those who sided intellectually with modern science to see theorizing about demons and witches as anything but erroneous. This was pre-eminently true of the liberal historiography of earlier scholars like Lecky, Lowell, White, and Burr, who saw learned witchcraft beliefs as the product of dogmatic theology and their decline as a victory for scientific enlightenment.[6] But even Lynn Thorndike (who believed, in any case, that magic was always the precursor of science) talked of writers on demonology demeaning themselves ‘by descending to this lower level’ of enquiry.[7] The outstanding modern example is that of Hugh Trevor-Roper who, much as he wished to acknowledge the relativism of Lucien Febvre and the contingent nature of rationality, still dismissed demonology as ‘hysterical’, ‘lunatic’, the ‘rubbish of the human mind’, and ‘more bizarre than the psychopathic delusions of the madhouse’.[8]

This kind of crude rationalism is also no longer with us but insidious readings of demonology of a related sort remain. Where it is a question of plotting the general direction of arguments in texts, commentators have misconstrued this by assuming that authors could be reassuringly separated into those who accepted the reality of witchcraft and the need for witch trials, and those who did not. George Lincoln Burr and Henry Charles Lea, for example, both read demonology not so much as a debate as a confrontation between two camps of writers, sharply divided on intellectual and moral grounds. In this way, texts were expected to reveal *either* belief or scepticism. Belief was supposedly a cut-and-dried affair, committing a writer to all that was alleged in witchcraft cases; scepticism released him just as comprehensively from this commitment.’ Individual arguments have also been given the wrong weighting when intruded upon by modernistic expectations. There has been a temptation to concentrate on forms of doubt that *we* would find persuasive, irrespective of how effective they were against the case at which they were actually aimed. Finally, disproportionate significance has been attached to the sceptics themselves, making them the cultural heroes of a scientific rationalism retrospectively applied. They alone (in this view) had the courage and understanding to strip away the false reasoning of demonology and expose witchcraft beliefs to criticism. One still senses a feeling of relief in the discovery that, alongside the many enthusiasts for the great European witch hunt, other voices were raised in protest.[10]

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[*] In what follows, my arguments about the general contours of demonology run parallel to those of SchwerhofT, ‘Rationalitat im Wahn’, esp. 51—82, except that he starts with Weber rather than Foucault.

‘ Their views are summarized by Leland L. Estes, 'Incarnations of Evil: Changing Perspectives on the European Witch Craze’, *Clio,* 13 (1984), 136-9.

’ Thorndike, *History of Magic,* v. 70.

[1] H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Harmondsworth, 1969), 23 (admiring reference to Febvre), 105 ('even rationalism is relative’), 18-19 (condemnations).

’ G. L. Burr, 'The Literature of Witchcraft’, in R. H. Bainton and L. O. Gibbons (eds.), *George Lincoln Burr. His Life ...Selectionsfrom his Writings (Ithica,* NY, 1943), 166-89.

[10] This is the general mood, for example, of Henningsen, *Witches’ Advocate',* L. T h. Maes, ‘La Position des universités européennes devant le problème de la sorcellerie du xiv* au xvnf siècles, in *Rechtheef vele significatie: Rechtshistorische opstellen van Prof. L. Th. Maes* (Brussels, 1979), 33-49. For a more

Such readings become implausible as soon as the history of demonology is interpreted in the way Foucault regarded the history of medicine—and, indeed, in the way the history of early modem science has generally come to be regarded in the years between *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and *Leviathan and the Air-Pump.* For then the texts become simply expressions of an outmoded and rejected form of natural philosophy. The attribution of error becomes historiographically irrelevant, and the anxiety to isolate discreditable belief from liberating doubt goes away. What emerges instead is the realization that in witchcraft matters belief and doubt were never simple alternatives, or fixed and separate compartments of thought. They varied according to specific issues and were spread out along a continuous spectrum of reactions to witchcraft phenomena. What is especially striking is how few authors can be placed confidently at the two extremes. Only Bodin, and perhaps Remy (in some passages at least) were prepared to believe that nothing was impossible; and only Reginald Scot and some of his later English followers claimed that all of it was. This left a vast middle ground, occupied by hundreds of texts, where genuine attempts were made to discriminate. This is as much as to say that the rules of a particular science were at work in their pages, directing both the 'gaze' of the practitioners and their descriptions of things.

It was not merely that authors were thoroughly familiar with all the negative views. The continuance of neo-scholastic forms of debate, the popularity of the dialogue and the catechism style, and the notoriety of some of the sceptics would alone have ensured this. In Molitor's *Tractatus de lamiis,* for example, serious misgivings about the reality of witchcraft were voiced by 'Sigismund' (i.e. Archduke Sigismund of Austria, who commissioned the work), while in Erastus's dialogues Weyer's arguments were presented by 'Furnius', as well as being extensively summarized for the instruction of the magistrates of Basel.[11] The German pastor Franciscus Agricola numbered fifty-one arguments against taking sorcery and witchcraft seriously, none of which he accepted.[12] An especially even-handed treatment, written from a legal point of view and published anonymously in 1637, scrupulously examined the witchcraft debate from all its angles before, again, siding with those who demanded the death penalty.[13] Far more important, however, was the extent to which doubt was

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helpful, but still highly moralistic, account of demonology in the universities, see Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, 'Intellectual and Political Backgrounds of the Witch-Craze in Europe', in S. Dupont-Bouchat (ed.), *La Sorcellerie dans les Pays-Bas [De Hekserij in de Nederlanden]* (Kortrijk-Heulc, 1987), 37-65. In Robert H. West, *Reginald Scot and Renaissance Writings on Witchcraft* (Boston, *c.* 1984), the author's view of orthodox demonology is that it was credulous (pp. 16-17) and, by comparison with Scot, incoherent, irrational, and otherwise unsound. He explores the nonsensical idea that Scot was 'ahead of his time' (preface, pp. 39-57) and is so admiring that he concludes by repeating Lecky's tribute to him (pp. 122-3).

[11] Molitor's *Tractatus de lamiis et pythonicis* (text dated 10 Jan. 1489) was composed as a three-sided debate. Commentary in Wolfgang Ziegeler, *Möglichkeiten derKritikam Hexen- undZauberwahn im ausgchenden Mittelalter* (Cologne and Vienna, 1973), 111-36; Erastus, *Deux Dialogues,* esp. 439-53.

[11] Franciscus Agricola, *Gründtlicher Bericht, ob Zauberey die argste undgrewlichste sünd aujf Erden sty* (Cologne, 1597), 153-231.

[11] *Responsumjuris, oder Rechtliches und auszfiihrliches Bedencken von Zauberin, deren Thun, Wesen uid Vermögen, auch was Gestalt dieselbe zubestrajfen ... gestellet durch einen hochgelehrten und gar vomehtiui JC“* (Frankfurt/Main, 1637), *passim,* and on the death penalty, 106-38; the work was written *c.* 1594 in

built into the very fabric of demonology—and this from the earliest fifteenth-century tracts onwards. Repeatedly readers were warned that the subject was controversial and that, faced with the question of the reality of demonic effects and the authenticity of witchcraft, no rational man would insist that they were all illusory or all true. Often, texts were arranged so that they discussed alternately the opinions of those who accepted too much and those who rejected too much.[14] Johann Ellinger hoped typically to strike a balance between the total exoneration of witches and the prejudices of ‘the foolish idiot, the common rabble, and the ordinary crowd’, who wished to send anyone accused of the crime immediately to the stake.[15] The Tübingen theologian Theodor Thumm put the general view succinctly when he explained: ‘Some ascribe no effects entirely to [witches]; others however enlarge their power more broadly than is reasonable. The former err in restraint, the latter in excess. Keeping to the middle way, we hold them responsible not indeed for nothing at all, nor yet for all effects.’[16] ‘Atheistical Incredulity’ and ‘over-fond Credulity’ were the extremes complained of by the Englishman Henry Hally well in 1681, as well as by his compatriots Joseph Glanvill and Richard Baxter.[17] But these later seventeenth-century defenders of witchcraft beliefs were not making concessions to some fresh, post-Restoration spirit of doubt. A century before them Kling James had said that avoiding the same extreme opinions was like sailing ‘betwixt Charybdis and Scylla’.[18] And similar claims to moderation were voiced by Juan Maldanado, Martin Del Rio, Philipp Ludwig Elich, Francesco Maria Guazzo, Benito Pereira, Esprit de Bosrogcr, Pierre Binsfcld, John Gaule, and many, many others.[19]

The fact that these claims were made so frequently and by so many indicates that the great majority of witchcraft writers were prepared to question as well as to affirm, in the hope of establishing what John Cotta called ‘a temperate mediocritie’ of opinion.[20] This is why Balthasar Bckker, who was definitely intemperate in his scepticism, knew that he was outnumbered by those who ‘partly admit that which is

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the Palatinate and is attributed to Philipp Hofman (or Hoffmann); cf. Loys Lc Caron [Charondas],^««-*tions diverses et discours* (Paris, 1579), fos. 31 *-43’, for the arguments for and against the reality of bewitchment, with Lc Caron accepting the first.

[14] See e.g. Scribonius, *De sagarum natura,* fos. 29^{r}-39^{f}; Perrault, *Demonologie,* 1-64; Casaubon, *Treatise proving spirits, witches and supernatural operations,* see esp. 4,6,155-9; d’Autun, *L’ Incredulite sfavante,* 11-24 and preface.

” Ellinger, *Hexen Coppel,* ‘Dedication ^{Xh} *Th\ivc\vc\,Tractatustheologicus,Tl.*

[17] Hallywell, *Melampronoea,* 87; Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus,* 267-73; Baxter, *Certainty of the world of spirits,* 82. Moody E. Prior, ‘Joseph Glanvill, Witchcraft, and Seventeenth-Century Science’, *Modern Philology,* 30 (1932-3), 181, notes Glanvill’s ‘complete acceptance of all that had been objected against the possibility of witchcraft*.

[11] James VI and I, *Daemonologie,* 42.

” Del Rio, *Disquisitionum magicarum,* 60; Pcrerius, *sldversus fallaces et superstitiosas artes,* 4-9; Maldonado, *Traicltdesanges et demons,* fo. 178’; Elich, *Daemonomagia,* 60-1; Esprit de Bosrogcr, *PieteaJJligee,* ‘Advertissement au lecteur’; Binsfcld, *Tractatus,* ‘Prefatio*; Gaule, *Cases of conscience,* 4-7; and on ghosts and other allied spirits, Taillepied, *Treatise of ghosts,* ‘Epistle’, pp. xvii-xix. For more examples from France, see Jonathan L. Pearl, ‘French Catholic Demonologists and their Enemies in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries’, *Church Hist.* 52 (1983), 457-67; Pearl attributes the ‘middle position’ to a two-pronged attack on ‘popular’ credulity and ‘elite’ (esp. judicial) incredulity.

[20] John Cotta, *A short discoverie of ignorant practisers* (London, 1619), 56.

ordinarily said, and partly reject it'.[21] Demonology was always a debate, never a closed system of dogmatic and uncritical thought, and 'credulous' seems rarely the right word to apply to its authors.[22] Forms of criticism that look to us to have been decisive in undermining it turn out to have been either ineffectual against it, or even presupposed by its arguments. In short, doubt was not a heroic stance, nor belief a case of intellectual capitulation. Theorizing about witchcraft was an occasion for critical thought, supported (as Foucault again would have said) by a particular distribution of the possible and the impossible in nature. These, then, are the terms in which a symmetrical account of its history ought to be written.

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Discrimination cannot be exercised without options. What made witchcraft a matter for debate and, indeed, controversy, was the existence of a range of explanations of preternatural phenomena. All *mira* (we recall from Chapter 11) had to be located somewhere on a grid with four reference points: the demonic; the non-demonic; the true; the false. And without this compromising their general acceptance of demonic agency, authors were well aware of the category errors that could occur when phenomena were misplaced. Advising great caution in their attribution, Gaule asked of 'wondrous and dismall Events' whether 'some be not to be referred to the Mirablcs of nature; some to contingcncic and casualty, some to divine judgment, some to Diabolicall obsession, as well as some to Effascination?' Thus anyone investigating witchcraft—and Gaule himself did not doubt its reality—needed exceptional skill in natural philosophy,

> that they may discern betwixt things mccrly pracstigious, and the Mirablcs of Nature, in her occult Qualities, Sympathies, Antipathies, and apt conjunction of Actives to Passives. Through Ignorance whereof, a Country Fellow is ready to cry a Witch, or a thing done in the Devills name, if hec sec one make iron to walke after him, though by vertue of a Loadstone.[23]

The intention, then, was to isolate what was genuine in one particular *minim*—witchcraft—from what was either spurious or occasioned entirely by natural causation. Opportunities for caution, doubt, and even outright scepticism were, therefore, present from the start.

At the centre of attention, of course, were those actions which the devil's allowed intellectual and physical skills made perfectly possible. It was on these that the reality of witchcraft, and hence part, at least, of the culpability of the witch, rested. To begin with, nothing at all could happen unless incorporeal and invisible spirits assumed bodily forms. But with instances available from Genesis onwards, it was straightforward (at least until the onset of corpuscularian philosophy) to argue that the devil could present himself tangibly either by means of what Rémy called 'some concretion and condensation of vapours' or other manipulations of the elements, or by animating corpses.[24] As one Restoration expert declared: 'If we can believe, that the Devil can speak with an audible voice, and come under a visible shape, as is very probable, he appeared to our Savior, why should it be thought incredible, that he may not do the like to Men and Women.'[25] Such was the malleability of the air, wrote Sebastien Michaelis, that it 'doth easily take the impression of all colours and formes'. If rainbows appeared naturally, if clouds could in any case look like dragons and serpents, if the corruption of the atmosphere in summer led to the raining of toads and frogs and the engendering of butterflies and vermin, then it was easier still for spirits to use air to manufacture human and animal shapes and don them like garments.[26] Once this was granted it made little sense to doubt that the devil could intrude himself physically into human affairs, meet and converse with men and women, and persuade some of them to make agreements with him. His extraordinary agility, strength, and speed made it equally credible that he could transport them off to real sabbats without breaking any of the laws of local motion. There was simply 'no difficulty' in it, according to Bartolommeo Spina.[27]

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[21] Balthasar Bckkcr, *The world bewitch *d; or, an examination of the common opinions concerning spirits: their nature, power, administration, and operations. As also, the effects men are able to produce by their communication,* trans, from the French edn. of *De betoverde weereld* (n.p. [London], 1695), vol. i only, 221.

[22] A point acknowledged by Teall, 'Witchcraft and Calvinism', 24-5; Midcl fort, *Witch Hunting,* ch. 3, esp. 65, and Pearl, 'French Catholic Dcmonologists and their Enemies, 457-67; cf. Thomas, *Religion aid the Decline ofMagic,* 539. For the supposed 'credulity' of the apologists for witch trials, see Sydney Anglo» 'Melancholia and Witchcraft: The Debate between Wier, Bodin, and Scot', in A. Gerlo (ed.), *Folic cl déraison d la Renaissance* (Brussels, 1976), 218-19. For a contemporary history of the witchcraft controversy, particularly as it affected the Netherlands, see Erich Mauritius, *praeses* (Christophorus Daurer, *respondens), Dissertatio inauguralis, de denuntiatione sagarum*"(Tubingen, 1664), 4-27.

[21] Gaule, *Cases of conscience,* 98,103-4, see also 5.

It was in such naturalistic terms that the Dominican Johannes Vineti, the Paris theologian and, later, inquisitor, helped to establish the Thomistic demonology of the middle years of the fifteenth century.[28] Over a century later, the experts were more explicit but their arguments had not changed. 'What hath it in it', demanded Daneau of transvection, 'contrary to the course of nature, or disagreeing from the force and essencie of our bodies?'[29] It was not, agreed Henry Holland, an 'impossibility in nature'; nor, according to an Italian inquisitor, did it exceed the natural power of demons.[30] The author of an account of the Swedish witchcraft cases of 1669-70 said there was no more point in questioning it than in doubting 'that the Wind can overthrow Houses, or drive Stones, and other heavy Bodies upward from their Centre'.[31] There was, then, no natural impediment to witches flying to the sabbat, and, once they were there, all manner of physically possible abominations were equally available for the imaginations of authors to feed on. Even to a minimalist—

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[24] Rémy, *Demonolatry,* 12. [21] Sinclair, *Satan's invisible world,* p. xix.

[26] Michaelis, *Discourse of spirits,* 26,28-9, see also 47,118-21,124.

[27] Bartolommeo Spina, *Quaestio destrigibus,* in *Malleus maleficarum* (1669 edn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 1). 79 (first pub. 1524).

[21] Johannes Vineti [Vivetus], *Tractatus contra demonum invocatores* (n.p. [Cologne], n.d. [r. 1487J), sigs. aviii^{r}-ciii^{r}.

[29] *Dineau, Dialogue of witches, sigs. Gvif-Gvin'.*

[M] Holland, *Treatise against witchcraft,* sig. E3^{r}; Giovanni Alberghini, *Manuale qualificatorum sanctiss. Inquisitionis* (Palermo, 1642), 155. Cf. Frisius, *I'on dess Teujfels Nebelkappen,* 221; Binsfeld, *Tractatus,* 59-78.

[”] Homeck, 'An account', in Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus,* 571.

another fifteenth-century Dominican, Girolamo Visconti—it was always possible in principle for these things to happen, even if none of them actually did?[2]

In the realm of *maleficium,* it was obviously feasible to derive real damage, real disease, and real death from the physical powers and abilities of devils?[3] The story of Job alone furnished all the necessary evidence. Those who could manipulate the elements and interfere with natural processes could plainly create havoc with the weather, destroy livestock and crops, ruin health, and destroy families and communities. Lists of possible hurts extended from climate to politics, and from the minuscule to the global, but every demonology presupposed this range in principle. It is true that apportioning the moral and criminal responsibility of witches for *maleficium* was a matter of much greater subtlety, since it involved religious and ethical considerations as well as questions about physical causation. Deciding this causation itself, however, was not a major difficulty, since most of the arts of witchcraft were universally thought to be empty of physical effect. It was argued that they were usually attempts to link entities that had no causal bearing on one another in nature. It was this, indeed, that made them demonic arts, and not merely bad science. Examples were the supposedly harmful effects wrought by gestures alone, like looking or touching, by ceremonies and rituals, like stirring water to bring storms, or (in a case to be dealt with in detail in a later chapter) by the mere pronunciation of words. In and for themselves, after all, magicians and witches had no greater capacity to effect things with the means they used than other human beings. All alike were constrained by the same natural limits to creaturcly powers; 'witches', said Theodor Thumm, 'can do nothing further than human properties and powers allow.'[34] It followed that effects beyond their capacities could only be achieved, or even hoped for, if some agent with superhuman (though not, we recall, *supernatural)* powers was also involved. In classic demonology, devils made good the causal lacunae that opened up whenever the intentions of human agents exceeded the limits of natural efficacy.[3]'

It is important to stress the outright naturalism of these arguments. Needless to say, magicians and witches broke many other kinds of codes. But in the sphere of science the infractions that constituted their crime were against the laws of nature. Nature herself demanded the punishment of witches, wrote John Gaule, 'because they abuse her order'.[36] The orthodox doctrine was put succinctly by Thomas Erastus, the physician who wrote medical works against Paracelsus and a demonology

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[n] Visconti, *Lamiarum ... optisculum,*sig. aviii'.

[n] For typical accounts of *maleficium,* see Grillando, *Tractalus de sortilegiis,* in *Malleus maleficarum* (1669 edn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 2). 250-6; Elich, *Daemonomagia,* 76-121; Guazzo, *Compendium malejicaruni,* 19-25, 83-111; Torrcblanca, *Daemonologia,* 338-83. The section (bk. 5: 'De maleficis et corum dccep-tionibus') on demonology' in Johannes Nidcr's *Formicarius* (written 1435-7), is largely concerned with *maleficium* and other demonic afflictions, together with the proper remedies; see *Malleus maleficarum* (1669 edn.), i (vol. 1). 305-54.

[14] Thumm, *Tractalus theologicus,* 29-30; cf. Hemmingsen, *sldmonitio,* sig. B7^{r}.

[H] The essentially Aristotelian arguments for this view down to about 1500 are summarized by Richard Kieckhcfcr, *European Witch Trials: Their Foundations in Popular and Learned Culture, 1300-1500* (London, 1976), 79-88. An early 16th-c. example is Geiler, *Die emeis,* fo. XLV^{r}.

[16] Gaule, *Cases of conscience,* 172.

against Weyer: ‘Whoever tries with natural instruments to do things that surpass the strength of nature, using neither the help of God nor that of good Angels, is necessarily appealing for demonic aid by means of an open or secret pact.’[37] This is not the remark of a man whose thought allowed for no distinction between genuine and spurious causation—or between what might now be called scientific and occult knowledge. Nor evidently did Erastus believe that he was on the wrong side of this distinction. Far from vitiating their view of causation, inefficacy was essential to the way witchcraft authors defined their subject-matter. Since maleficent objects and actions (excepting cases of poisoning, for example) were deemed to have no actual efficacy, it was ‘confessed on all hands’, as Filmcr put it, ‘that the Witch doth not worke the wonder, but the Devill oncly’.[38] What was not in doubt was *his* capacity to achieve these real effects.

Two further examples will illustrate the central core of demonic possibilities (and human impossibilities) and the naturalistic character of the arguments. One of them is the causation of illnesses by witchcraft. Here the authenticity of individual instances always had to be demonstrated and was often (and with increasing frequency) contested. But the principle of demonically caused illness itself involved nothing more than a complicated piece of physics. According to Francesco Maria Guazzo, for example, the devil could

> induce the melancholy sickness by first disturbing the black bile in the body and so dispersing a black humour throughout the brain and the inner cells of the body: and this black bile he increases by superinducing other irritations and by preventing the purging of the humour. He brings epilepsy, paralysis and such maladies by a stoppage of the heavier physical fluids, obstructing and blocking the ventricle of the brain and the nerve-roots. He causes blindness or deafness, bringing a noxious secretion in the eyes or ears. Often again he suggests ideas to the imagination which induce love or hatred or other mental disturbances. For the purpose of causing bodily infirmities he distils a spirituous substance from the blood itself, purifies it of all base matter, and uses it as the aptest, most efficacious and swiftest weapon against human life: I say that from the most potent poisons he extracts a quintessence with which he infects the very’ spirit of life.[39]

In a sermon on witchcraft and demonism of 1612, the French theologian André Valladier was equally explicit. The devil, he said, had full power over all the spirits and humours of the body to displace them, weaken or excite them, or otherwise disable them from working properly. He could produce anger, vengefulness, violence, and murder by flooding the heart with blood, awaken venereal lust by inflaming the male sperm and genitals, and cause unbearable heaviness by acting on the melancholic humour: ‘and so with the others, causing especially the strange raptures that one sees much of in the case of witches.’[40] There was, indeed, no medical disorder which the

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[17] Erastus, *Deux Dialogues,* 499, and more generally on the issue of efficacy, 403-4, 415-20, 464-6, 472-5, 490-99. For same statement, see Roberts, *Treatise of witchcraft,* 77-8. Cf. also Hemmingsen, *Admonitio,* sig. B7'; Frisius, *Von dess Teuffels Nebelkappen,2\8.*

[M] *[Filmcr], Advertisement,!.*

[39] Guazzo, *Compendiummalefcarum, \06.*

[40] Valladier, *Sainctephilosophic,* 619.

devil might not inflict on his victims—not even leprosy (as in the case of Job) Or epilepsy, said the authors of *Malleus nialeficarum,* these being diseases arising usually ‘from some longstanding physical predisposition or defect’. ‘The natural power of devils’, they wrote, ‘is superior to all corporeal power.’[41] Among the other demonically caused ailments discussed in the literature of witchcraft were blindness, contortions, vomitings, and paralysis.[42]

It should be added that demonic pathologies were as common in academic medicine as they were in demonology'. They were made the subject of single treatises, like those of Giovanni Battista Codronchi, Pietro Piperno, and William Drage,[43] and they were dealt with in demonologies written by professors of medicine, like Andreas Cesalpino, whom Thorndike calls ‘the most distinguished Italian scientist’ to write on witchcraft.[44] Many dissertations and disputations held in the medical faculties of the European universities dealt with the topic.[45] In 1703, for example, Friedrich Hoffmann published Bueching’s doctoral dissertation *Depotentia diaboliin corpora,* which explained that the devil acted on the ‘animal spirits’ in the human body, thus interfering with the imagination, other mental functions, and the motor activities, and inducing illusions, trances, and convulsions. Various internal physiological factors, together with differences of sex, age, and diet made some people more prone to this than others.[46] Some of the most important medical authorities of the age committed themselves to the notion, including Jean Fcrnel, Jacques Fontaine, Jourdain Guibelet, Francisco Valles (Vallesius), and Daniel Senncrt.[47] Specialist areas of research, such as gynaecology, were drawn into the debate, while demonic causation was also a main issue in medical discussions of the symptoms associated with fascination, melancholy *{balneum diaboli),* lycanthropy, and ephialtes. There was, in fact, a complete identity of belief between the specialist writers on witchcraft and a substantial portion of the medically orthodox. Guazzo was able to appeal with confidence to Codronchi, Cesalpino, Fernel, Vallesius, ‘and other most learned physicians’;[43] Piperno, Drage, and Sennert were familiar with the literature of witchcraft.

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[41] [Kramer and Sprcngcr], *Malleus malefcarum,* 297.

[42] For standard accounts of demonically caused illnesses, see Gervasio Pizzurini, *Enchiridion exorcisticum; compendiosissime continent diagnosim, prognosim, ac therapiam medicam et divinam affect ionum niagicarum* (Lyons, 1668), **passim;** sec csp. 31—36 on witchcraft; Binsfeld, *Tractatus,* 106-7; Scribonius, *De sagarum nalura,* fos. 48-58.

[4'] Codronchi, *De morbis veneficis,* see csp. fos. 110*—15^{r}; Petrus Pipcmus, *De magicis affectibus horum dignotione, praenotione, curatfiojne, medica, stratagemmatica, divina, plerisque, curationibus electis (Ntpfa,* 1634); William Dragc, *Daimonomageia. A small treatise ofsicknesses and diseases from witchcraft and supernatural causes* (London, 1665).

[44] Andreas Ccsalpinus, *Daemonum investigate peripatetica* (Florence, 1580); Thorndike, *History of Magic,* vi. 338.

[45] For examples, see the discussions *of* Oskar Diethelm, ‘The Medical Teaching of Demonolog)’ in the 17th and 18th Centuries’, *J. /fist. Behavioural Sciences,* 6 (1970), 3-15, and Thorndike, *History of Magic,* vii. 338-71. There is a particularly full account in Johann Michaelis, *praeses* (Antonius Marquart, *respondent), Morbos ab incantatione et veneficiis oriundos* (Leipzig, 1650), originating in the medical faculty of the Leipzig Academy; see csp. B4’-C1* for a detailed account of the sicknesses, diseases, and other pathologies brought by demons. In 1589, one of the examination questions for medical students at Oxford was ‘An demones possint inferre morbos?*; C. W. Boase and A. Clark (eds.), *Register of the University of Oxford* (2 vols. (vol. 2 in 4 pts.]; Oxford, 1885—9), ii (pt. 1). 190.

[46] Sec Lester S. King, ‘Witchcraft and Medicine: Conflicts in the Early Eighteenth Century*, in CirM *Tiliam: Studia historiae medicinae, Gerrit Arie Lindeboom septuagenario oblata* (Leiden, 1974), 122-39, csp-127-8, discussing Friedrich Hoffmann, *praeses* (Godofrcdus Bucching, *respondent), Disputatio inaugurAis medico-philosophica de potentia diaboli in corpora* (1703), repub. in id., *Opera omnia physico-medica* (6 vols.’, Geneva, 1740-53), v. 94-103. King fails to notice the utter conventionality of Hoflmann’s demonology-

[47] Jean Fcrnel, *De abditis rerum causis* (Venice, 1550), 274 (and see 270-9: ‘Et morbus, el remedia quaedam trans naturam esse’) first pub. 1548; Jacques Fontaine, *Des marques des sorciers et de la reellcfof session que le diable prend sur le corps des hommes. Sur le subject du proces de Eabominable et detestable sorcitf Louys Gaufridy* (Lyons, 1611), 13-20, 21-30 (on the devil’s ability to mortify parts of the body, and his

A second important aspect of demonic naturalism concerned intellectual rather than physical power—the devil’s foreknowledge and ability to predict. This was an issue fundamental to the status of oracles and divination by witchcraft, but also to belief in providence itself. It was insisted, on principle, that the devil could not know the hearts and minds of men and women, let alone compete in prescience with God. But he could disclose to witches and magicians enough future things to give credit to their art, and his predictions had also been the basis of the ancient vaticinatory religions. The main point was that a predictive skill was entirely consistent with his natural properties, as Rémy, for example, explained. Longevity and memory of things since the beginning of the world provided opportunities for those comparisons, inductions, and conjectures that humans also made, but on a superhuman scale. Unbelievable subtlety of perception and amazing agility allowed for ‘the early announcement of that which has already occurred or the anticipatory prediction of what is to come’—even in far-off places. And perfect knowledge of‘all the inner and hidden secrets of nature’ furnished grounds for ‘certain and unerring judgement’ of the outcome of natural processes.[49] But little of this differed in kind from the foreknowledge available to anybody with sense and experience—the sort of‘natural divination’ always allowed even by the most fervent opponents of astrology. The devil was, in the end, only guessing supcr-intelligently at things with necessary and therefore regular causes.[50] His advantages were categorized for the most part in terms of skills that were, in principle, within the competence of natural men and women—even if no man or woman ever enjoyed them in full.

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mixing with illnesses and ‘evil’humours); Jourdain Guibelet, *Trois discoursphilosophiques ...le troisiemede l’humeur mélancolique* (Evreux, 1603), fos. 262-86' (on Guibelet, see Jean Céard, ‘Folie ct démonologic au XVf sièclc’, in Gerlo (cd.), *Folie et déraison,* 135—43; Franciscus Vallesius, *De iis quaescripta suntphysice in libris sacris, site de sacra philosophia* (Lyons, 1595), 158-67 (seeesp. 163-4: ‘Daemonum causa est externa morborum’), 376—85; see also 88-93 (Vallesius’s own demonology), 218-220 (on Vallesius, see Giancarlo Zanier, *Medicina e Filosofia tra '500 e '600* (Milan, 1983), 20-38, csp. 32-6); Daniel Sennert, *Pracltcae medieinae,* in id., *Opera* (3 vols.; Paris, 1641), iii. 1140, see also ii. 136, 157-8,220.

[44] Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum,* 105.

[4'] Remy, *Demonolatry,* 172. For similar arguments, see Ciruelo, *Treatise,* 171-9; Masse, *De /’imposture,* bk. 2, fos. 179’—184', 193 ’—8'; Zanchy, *De operibus Dei,* cols. 181—4; Casmann, *elngelographia,* 428-48; Hemmingsen, */tdmonitio,* sigs. G4'-Hl';Pons, *De potential scientia daemonum,* 105; Caspar Peucer, *Commentarius de praecipuis divinationum generibus* (Wittenberg, 1553), fos. 25'-31'.

[50] Fomer, *Panoplia armaturae Dei,* 42^4.

These, then, were the most important areas of demonic, but none the less real action. To contest them overall would have been to question the foundations of Christian natural philosophy. Yet, as we have seen, this same philosophy placed limits on devils and so on demonological credulity; beyond them, therefore, it was just as difficult to believe. Three further questions were constantly debated as examples: Could demonic sexuality result in genuine miscegenation? Could attendance at sabbats be noncorporeal *(spiritualiter)* as well as corporeal? Could humans be changed by witchcraft into animals?[51] In each case, the answer was negative. The devil's agency failed here precisely because of those natural laws (and theological proprieties) that made him a creature. It followed that, even for those who believed in witchcraft, the confessions of witches must often contain impossibilities. At this point, therefore, illusion replaced reality as the focus of demonological enquiry.

The external attributes of demonic sexuality were not themselves in doubt. A devil capable of'clothing' himself with palpable substance was a devil capable of fulfilling at least the physical requirements of sexual intercourse with humans, 'wherein', wrote Sir Thomas Browne, 'there may be action enough to content decrepit lust, or passion to satisfy more active venerics'.[52] What Satan could not be granted was procreative power; the incentive was absent and the incompatibility of species too great. Procreation, insisted Remy, was 'governed by the laws of nature' and these also restricted fertility to forms of animal life. If births were to follow they would necessarily have to originate in human semen acquired by succubus devils, preserved in transit, and rapidly inseminated by their incubus colleagues. Supported by such medieval heavyweights as Augustine, Aquinas, and Averroes, this was a possibility defended by many witchcraft experts. As Remy significantly admitted, it was a method that, again, differed only in matters of technique 'from the natural and customary way of men'. Nevertheless, for God to grant souls to progeny born in such circumstances would make him the abettor of 'monstrous obscenities'. Even the question of real births was, therefore, invariably left open. What was never accepted was genuine demonic parentship by miscegenation. Balthasar Bekker was quite correct when he wrote: 'There is not a Christian, be he Protestant or Papist, who believes that Spirits are truly capable of engendering.'[53] Witches might assert it, Remy had said a century earlier; ordinary men and women might assume it; legends, histories, and even Genesis might be full of suggestive examples. But it remained 'a deception, a contrivance, a fallacy and a delusion'.[54]

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[51] In addition to the texts cited in what follows, typical discussions of these three questions can be found in [Kramer and Sprcngcr], *Malleus maleficarurn,* 72-85,243-54 (sexuality), 234-43 (transvection), 151-60,269-81 (metamorphosis); Molitor, *Tractatusde lamiisetpythonicis,* in *Malleus maleficarurn* (1669 edn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 1). 22-8,37-9,41-3; Spina, *Quaeslio de strigibus,* in *Malleus maleficarurn* (1669 edn.), (vol. 2, pt. 1). 79-88; Michaelis, *Discourse of spirits,* 94-112; Scribonius, *De sagarum natura,* fos. 58'-86'; Binsfeld, *Tractatus,* 161-220; Heinrich Nicolai, *praeses* (with various *respondentes), De magicis actionibus* (Danzig, 1649), 73-144; Perrault, *Demonologie,* 108-16; d'Autun, *LTncredulitesfavante* 770-8,866-908.

” Browne, *Religio medici,* 44. ” Bekker, *World bewitch'd,* 240.

M Remy, *Demonolatry,* 11-27; cf. Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarurn,* 28-33; Frisius, Pon *dess TeuJJtk Nebelkappen,* 223-8; de Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges el demons,* 213-33; Torreblanca, Transaction created much the same problems. Well within the physical capabilities of demons, its reality was none the less compromised by the secondary claim that witches could be carried to sabbats in spirit (in *extasis* or *spiritualiter)* while their apparently inanimate bodies remained elsewhere.[55] Since this claim was, in effect, an attempt to reassure those who questioned whether witches went to sabbats at all or only dreamed that they did, to attack it was to encourage scepticism, rather than mitigate it. Yet this is what witchcraft writers did. Mixing theological and naturalistic orthodoxy, they understandably refused to accept the separation of matter and spirit other than in death. For the devil to extract witches from their bodies and return them again was thus the equivalent of a miracle—and not any miracle but something that recalled the Resurrection itself. It followed that those who confessed to attending sabbats while reported to be still at home at the time must indeed have been dreaming. The demonologically orthodox view was, accordingly, that attendance at sabbats was sometimes real (in which cases it was always corporeal) and sometimes imaginary. ‘Some really go to faraway lands and remote places by the devil’s aid’, was the typical conclusion of Castañega; ‘others, carried away out of their senses as in a heavy sleep, have diabolical revelations of remote and occult—and often false—things, whereby they many times affirm what is not true.’[56] In effect, the doubts expressed in the *Canon episcopi* were absorbed into orthodox demonology—with the consequence that we cannot, after all, draw a contrast between medieval scepticism and early modern credulity in witchcraft matters.[57]

The need to preserve the miraculous as a category was, likewise, the insurmountable obstacle to belief in metamorphosis. Witchcraft narratives and confessions often depended on the changing of witches or their victims into animals, and the case of lycanthropy was especially well discussed. Yet with the exception of Bodin and a few others (whose reasons we must return to), no one could accept the phenomenon itself as real.[58] It was philosophically and morally distasteful to suppose that the human

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Daemonologia, 289-95; Elich, *Daemonomagia,* 125-9; Valdcrrama, *Histoire generate,* bk. 3,25-45; Johann Heinrich Pou, *Specimen juridicum, de nefando lamiarum cum diabolo coitu, von der Hexen schdndlichen Beyschlass mil dem bosen Feind* (Jena, 1689).

[55] See, for example, Bernard de Como, *Tractatus destrigibus,* in *Malleus malefic arum* (1669 edn.),i(vol. 2, pt. 2). 109-30, esp. 114; Bodin, *Démonomanie,* fos. 89*-94'. The arguments for and against the reality of transvection (and thus of the sabbat) are rehearsed at length in Ponzinibio, *Tractatus de lamiis,* 228-79.

[54] Castañega, *Tratado,* 306. Cf. Geiler, *Die emeis,* fos. xxxvii*-xxxviii^r; Samson, *Neun ... Hexen Predigt,* sig. Kiv*; Elich, *Daemonomagia,* 129-42; James VI and I, *Daemonologie,* 38-42; de Lancre, *Tableau de l 'inconstance des mauvais anges et demons,* 78-110.

[57] A point made by Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1987), 43-4.

[58] For typical discussions, see de Lancre, *Tableau de Tinconstance des mauvais anges el demons,* 235-53, esp. 243-5; Torreblanca, *Daemonologia,* 240-4; Elich, *Daemonomagia,* 148-56; Valderrama, *Histoiregenerate,* bk. 3, 252-78; Zacharias Rivander, *Bedencken, Ob die Hexen und Unholden, die Leuth in unvemiinjftige Thier verwandeln können, oder nicht,* in Felix Bidembach (ed.), *Consiliorum theologicorum decas VII* (Frankfurt, 1611), 132—43; Claude Pricur, *Dialogue de la lycanthropie, ou transformation d'hommes en loups, vulgairement dits loups-garous, et si telle sepeut faire* (Louvain, 1596), fos. 22'—55*; Jean de Nynauld, *De La Lycanthropie, transformation et extase des sorciers* (Paris, 1615; new edn., Paris, 1990), *passim,* and see the introductory essays by Nicole Jacques-Chaquin, Jean Céard, and Maxime Préaud (Nynauld also deals with transvection).

anima could function in an animal body (and vice versa), and impossible for the devil to either effect the transfer or transmute substantial forms. Guazzo expressed the common view when he concluded that metamorphoses were ‘deceptive illusionsand opposed to all nature.... [They were] magic portents and illusions, having the form but not the reality of those things which they present to our sight.’5’ Otherwise, wrote a specialist on lycanthropy, they would constitute a ‘second creation’.[60]

In these three areas of the subject, then, believers in witchcraft exercised as much scepticism as any ‘sceptic’. And they were left with the task of explaining away as much as they were prepared to defend. Of course, their explanatory grid allowed them a second option that was itself still narrowly demonological—that of demonic but false phenomena. Resorting to the devil’s elaborate repertoire of deceptions, they could account for apparent impossibilities as tricks played upon the human mind and senses. The devil’s actions, we recall, were either natural or they were nothing. Monstrous demonic progeny might be instantly substituted for the babies delivered to pregnant witches, or at least represented in shapes to delude them. Replicas exact enough to deceive their own husbands could be left in the beds of witches while they flew—body and soul intact—to sabbats.[61] Lycanthropic humans might be replaced with real wolves so quickly that transmutation appeared to occur, and illusory wolves might be represented to the senses if either real humans were ‘wrapped’ in the required shape or the air between eye and object was condensed appropriately to produce what Guazzo called ‘an aerial effigy’.[62] At the very best, the devil could achieve what Node called ‘transfigurations’, changing not the substance but the accidents of things to give them the appearance of more drastic alteration.[63] There was no end to the phenomena that could be saved in these ways, with the ultimate consequence, noted already, that the very grounds of knowledge could become uncertain. But the illusions themselves were allowed for in nature, and in the short term their existence allowed witchcraft authors to maintain a consistently naturalistic position.

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This naturalism is, understandably, yet more apparent when explanations were sought for these and other false phenomena outside the category of the demonic—that is to say, according to a third explanatory alternative that provided for non-demoniebut illusory happenings. Nature, after all, could itself play tricks on the sick, such that witchcraft writers needed what John Gaulc called an expertise in ‘physicke’ in order to identify them.[63] At this point a general threat to orthodox demonology could obviously arise, with witchcraft experiences becoming reducible to hallucinations, sensory malfunction, misreadings of natural events, and the like. But it is important to stress that it was not only those who, like Johann Weyer and Reginald

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” Guazzo, *Compendium malefic a rum.* 50-1.

[60] Sieur de Beauvois de Chauvincourt, *Discours de la lycantropie ou de la transmutation des homines cn loups* (Paris, 1599), 22.

[61] Examples in Daneau, *Dialogue of witches,* sig. Gviii*.

[62] Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum.* 51; Chauvincourt, D/rroi/rj, *passim.*

6J Node, *Declamation,* in Masse, *De rimposture.* ‘Advertisscment au lectcur*.

[64] Gaule, *Cases of conscience.* 99.

Scot, attacked witchcraft beliefs in a wholesale way who turned to extraordinary natural causes for these alternative explanations. Because demonology itself was committed to discarding individual aspects of witchcraft on the grounds of physical impossibility, it too was required to give reasons why they nevertheless appeared in confessions or were given credence by the ignorant and unwary. Demonic prestidigitation was one; but non-demonic deception was another.

This is clear, for example, in Pierre Le Loyer's *Quatres Livres des spectres*^ where, in the course of defending the reality of demonism against the arguments of 'naturalists', he adopts a variety of almost Pyrrhonist objections to accepting either the evidence of the senses or the promptings of reason in cases of apparently aberrant phenomena.[65] James VI and I thought that the supposed attentions of incubus and succubus devils could be traced to nightmare, because it led to physical sensations of constriction by 'some unnaturall burden or spirite'. Like most others, he also attributed lycanthropy to a disease resulting from 'a naturall super-abundance of Melancholic'.[66] Richard Bernard, a Somerset clergyman who thought that 'all sorts of Witches ought to dye', listed several 'natural' diseases and other conditions that could be mistaken for bewitching; they included catalepsy, apoplexy, 'Coma vigilans', the 'falling sicknesse', 'divers kindes of convulsions', and the troubling of the mind by 'visions and imaginations'. Natural causes could thus give rise to 'very strange tortures, pangs and torments, as if the afflicted were bewitched in the judgement of most ordinary apprehensions'.[67] In illnesses and dreams, wrote Jacob Graeter of Schwäbisch Hall, 'many wonderfully strange things' were very likely to happen.[68]

Naturally induced deceptions could also offer convenient parallels for those created by devils. Alongside *fascinum magicum*^ the Danish witchcraft author Niels Hemmingsen placed *fascinum natura malignum*—citing the delusions caused to the vision of menstruating women.[69] Francois Perrault argued that if natural pathologies, especially melancholy, could create havoc in the human imagination, it was not to be doubted that Satan too could mould it to advantage.[70] Here, as elsewhere, it was taken for granted that the devil could follow wherever nature led the way. Hence those many occasions where illusions were the joint product of some initiating natural illness and demonic opportunism.

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The remaining position on the explanatory grid governing accounts of witchcraft was also occupied by natural causes, but in this case of real phenomena. Here, the natural could not be the true source of effects that were impossible to devils, since the boundary between possibility and impossibility was the same in both cases. Instead, true natural wonders, because they yielded insights into the secret workings of nature, were the ultimate point of reference for what could occur in the whole field of [61] * * * preternatural agency. In this case, the threat to demonology was a lot more serious, since these were insights that (in combination with the evidence of natural illusions) were capable of undermining its version of events in a wholesale, and not just a partial, manner. Here was powerful ammunition for those thoroughgoing sceptics who wished to question the demonic responsibility for witchcraft events and explain them away largely or wholly in terms of non-demonic categories. Once again, however, the threat was by no means decisive and the weight of the arguments was not simply in one direction. Demonology probably gained as much as it lost from direct comparison between what devils could do and what could occur cither spontaneously in nature or with the help of human artifice. In particular, additional credibility was given to the idea that demonic agency was built on occult, not miraculous power, and at the same time its real, rather than its apparent, efficacy could be demonstrated.

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[61] On the same subject, see Taillepied, *Treatise of ghosts*, 12-31,39-40.

[64] James VI and I, *Daemonologie, 6%* 61.

[67] Bernard, *Guide to grand-jury men,* 249,11-28,194.

[M] Jacob Graeter, *Hexen oder Unholden Predigten* (Tübingen, 1589), sig. Cii^{r}.

[w] Hemmingsen, *sldmonitio,* sig. K6^{V}.

[70] Perrault, *Demonologie,* 101-7.

At the heart of these complex issues of classification and apportionment, lay the investigation of what, throughout the period of the witchcraft prosecutions, was known as 'natural magic'. It was natural magic that was demonology's chief explanatory rival and yet, at the same time, the indispensable analogue of demonic knowledge and power. Such, however, was the prominence of natural magic in early modern philosophical circles, and such the importance of its relationship to witchcraft theory, that separate chapters will need to be devoted to these questions. Meanwhile, we should turn for a moment to consider how knowledge of witchcraft was actually produced and contested by individual theorists working with the explanatory alternatives available to them. The obvious way to do this is to look again at some of the texts and arguments of the classic witchcraft debates of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. This will also help to illustrate further the interpenetration of'belief ' and 'scepticism' and the overall resilience of demonology in the face of controversy.

13

Believers and Sceptics

The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.

(Proverbs 14:15)

Any man who maintained that all the effects of magic were true, or who believed that they were all illusions, would be rather a radish than a man.

(Fancesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum)*

THE matters we have been considering were undoubtedly among the most recondite in the whole field of demonological enquiry; they do not exactly enthrall modern minds. What must be insisted upon again is that, irrespective of their substance, they were grounded in what was taken to be natural knowledge and conducted in what was intended to be a critical spirit. None of the misgivings about the right attribution of phenomena came only from authors usually classed as sceptics; they emerged from demonology itself, as well as from the opponents of witch trials. This should make us more wary in our judgements both about the intentions of individual authors and about the cogency of their views. The damage that could be inflicted on witchcraft beliefs by scepticism depended on how these beliefs were defended. But because demonology presupposed doubt, it often anticipated the attacks made on it, with the result that the great witchcraft debate became circular and inconclusive. This can be illustrated if we re-examine some well-known individual contributions, together with the fortunes of the debate in one area of Europe—Germany.

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Henri Boguet's *Discours des sorciers* has often been singled out as an especially dogmatic and credulous work. In fact, it reveals just how carefully witchcraft beliefs might be tested against assumptions about real and spurious causal efficacy. What governed Boguet's attitude was not blanket credulity but (as Lucien Febvre recognized) standards of what it was both possible and impossible for human and demonic agents to effect.[1] These are applied, chapter after chapter, to the confessions of the *bourguignonne* witch Françoise Secretain, which Boguet takes as stereotypical. 'Whether it be possible for one to send demons into the body of another?'; 'Whether the copulation of Satan with a witch can bring to birth a living being?'; 'Whether witches can produce hail?'; 'Whether witches afflict with words?'; the very chapter headings of Boguet's enquiry indicate his preoccupations. A favoured strategy is to concede the plausibility of some aspect of witchcraft and even illustrate it in action, only to go on to demolish its authenticity and explain away the instances. The argument is thus carried forward by a series of depreciations. It continually recedes from inflated claims about efficacy to statements about what devils can actually achieve through second and natural causes. In the end, there is nothing in the exposition that is not entirely consistent with a rigorously naturalistic account of the world.

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[1] Lucien Febvre, 'Witchcraft: Nonsense or a Mental Revolution?', trans. K. Folca in Peter Burke (ed.), *A New Kind of History from the Writings of Febvre* (London, 1973), 185-92. On the careful and discriminating (but also peremptory) tone of Boguet's writing, see Nicole Jacques-Chaquin, 'La Sorcellerie et ses discours: Esquisse d'une typologie textuelle du discours démonologique', *Frenesie,* 9 (1990), 15.

‘A witch’s power’, Boguet begins, ‘is governed by that of the devil which is her familiar.’[2] Nine central chapters defend this claim by examining the supposed maleficent operation of rituals, powders, ointments, breath, words, looking, touching, magic wands, and images of wax. In every case, efficacy is said to be either natural or spurious. The devil can bring hailstorms precisely because they have natural causes and because all natural phenomena are at his command. No accompanying ritual can physically effect this; it merely symbolizes the demonic entanglement of its performers. If, as in the case of actual poisons, powders possess natural properties to harm, they can certainly be used to kill or injure. The devil, after all, ‘has knowledge of the properties of every herb.’[3] Otherwise they too are only signs. Unguents with real powers to stupefy can cause deep sleep and wonderful dreams; they might even be poisonous. Boguet therefore concentrates on their natural composition when identifying their effects on witches and their victims. Afflictions ‘caused’ by breathing or blowing on victims, charming them with maledictions, looking at them, touching them by hand or with wands, and sympathetic magic performed on their likenesses are all in reality caused directly by the devil using other means. Boguet even admits the possibility of non-demonically natural accounts of some of these forms of *nialeficium,* together with parallels from the natural world—for example, the powers of the basilisk. But his preference is always for a demonic solution, with the alleged means reduced to a merely ritual (that is to say, symbolic) accompaniment. The same is true of supposedly beneficent witchcraft and the power to heal by magic. This is due ‘entirely... to the help of Satan’, who emulates ‘the methods used by physicians’.[4] Boguet’s later advice concerning the proper physical remedies for diseases ‘caused’ by witchcraft drives home the same point. Since they in fact proceed from natural causes, they ‘can be cured naturally according to the science of medicine’. There is nothing, he says, ‘to prevent physicians from healing such maladies’, unless Satan continually renews them or ‘in his own subtle and occult manner’, exceeds the boundaries of known medical expertise.[5]

As for Boguet’s devils, they too conform rigorously to the requirements of natural science. They enter (or are sent) physically into demoniacs or corpses and borrow their bodily functions, or they create their own simulacrums of animal and human shapes. They can speak through human organs or simply ‘by an agitation and vibration of air’, ‘in a natural manner’.[6] Their coupling with witches is thus ‘real and actual’,[7] but the lack or loss of the body heat and sexual vitality necessary for procreation, and the disproportion of the two species, make miscegenation a physical (as well as a moral) impossibility. Boguct explains away monster births in the animal world that might suggest a different conclusion. Nature, he affirms, ‘delights in variety’. Monstrosities in human births likewise yield to explanations from early modern obstetrics—‘superfluity and excess of generative matter’, the force of the mother’s imagination on the foetus, and so on. These are matters on which ‘all philosophers and naturalists agree’.[8] Transvecting witches to sabbats is a physical possibility for devils, even if neither anointing nor ritual incantations have the slightest power to contribute. But Boguct cannot believe that achieving their purely spiritual attendance ‘is in any way possible’, for it would contravene the ‘secondary and natural causes’ on which Satan is obliged to rely.[9] The threefold explanation is certainly intricate, perhaps excessively so, but it is also entirely naturalistic. Perhaps Satan places a phantom in the marital bed to deceive the husband or acts as succubus to his sexual attentions; or he ‘induces so profound a sleep in those of the house, with mandragora or some other narcotic draft’, that they notice neither real departure nor real return; or he sends the witches themselves to sleep by the same method and makes them dream of the sabbat ‘so vividly that they think they have been there’.[10]

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[2] Boguet, *Examen of witches,* 15.
[1] Ibid. 67.
[4] Ibid. 101,107.
[5] Ibid. 118-19.
‘ Ibid. 28.
’ Ibid. 32.

Boguct reserves his most elaborate analysis for the case of metamorphosis. Citing many apparent ‘examples of the fact’ and admitting the existence of grounds for accepting them as true, he nevertheless ends by insisting categorically, and for the usual reasons, ‘that the metamorphosis of a man into a beast is impossible’. Instances turn out to be misreadings of the biblical language of metaphor or, in the case of suggestive parallels within the animal world, natural processes wrongly interpreted. Lycanthropy is not, however, a pure illusion, without all physical extension. Boguet’s first alternative is that Satan himself performs the required actions in the shape of a wolf, while planting the experience of having performed them in the deluded or drugged imaginations of witches and transferring any damage he incurs to their bodies. His preferred solution is, however, that witches themselves act as wolves either in physical disguise or as a consequence of a conviction that they have been transformed. This arises ‘from the Devil confusing the four Humours’ and is thus no less natural than the delusions arising from fevers and melancholy. In addition, Satan ‘befogs and deceives’ the eyesight of witnesses ‘so that they think they see what is not’. The results are real injuries, real murders, and even real cannibalism.[11]

Epistemologically speaking, there are no loose ends in Boguet’s *Discours des sorciers.* From first to last, he works with the categories of possibility and impossibility assigned to witchcraft by the natural philosophy of Aquinas. Consistent almost to the point of extravagance, he maps out his subject across the familiar fourfold grid; demonic/non-demonic, true/false. Everywhere there are comparative references to preternatural phenomena in the non-demonic sphere. Everywhere there are borrowings from the preternaturalists of the period—Girolamo Cardano, Jean Fernel, Oger (or Auger) Ferrier, even Paracelsus. Boguet departs from Paracelsus when the

[8] Ibid. 39. [9] Ibid. 48. [10] Ibid. 50-1. [11] Ibid. 138,143,146-7.

latter is not naturalistic *enough',* that is to say, on the issue of the allegedly physical powers of words and characters.[12] Above all, he depends heavily on Pierandrea Mattioli (Petrus Andreas Matthiolus) of Sienna, whose commentaries on the medical botany of Dioscorides did not prevent him taking a lively interest in the new vogue for chemical therapy.[13] The important point is that the framework for Boguct's causal analysis of witchcraft—that is to say, the source of the parallels and contrasts that enabled him to classify it as a phenomenon—was the natural philosophy of his era. The doings of witches like Fran^oise Secretain were bizarre enough to seem incredible. But they' were made possible by demonic knowledge of'the composition of the human body, and the virtue of the Heavens, the Stars, Birds, and Fishes, of trees and herbs and metals and stones'.[14] And the power to effect them using local motion was irresistible. Given that natural causation was here made the key to demonology, it is difficult to see how Boguet could have written any other kind of book.

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But if we can reassess the work of a classic 'believer' in these terms, what is to be made of those on the side of'scepticism'? Here, Johann Weyer's *De praestigiis daemontim* (1563) is conventionally regarded as a landmark in the emergence of full-scale doubt.[15] In essence, its argument was that, since witchcraft was both sex-specific and age-specific, it could be explained away in terms of the pathology of female senility and the tricks of devils. This notion of witchcraft was an assumption of Weyer's—a rather crucial one for his overall case. The pathology, however, was based on his own clinical findings, and the idea of 'presdigitatory' demonism was, of course, traditional. Ignorance and cruelty also played their part in the witch-hunting that Weyer deplored; torture could force a worthless confession from anyone for superstitious priests and ill-informed physicians to corroborate. More interesting to Weyer, however, were the reasons for voluntary confessions—even confessions made from utter conviction. His view was that, without exception, these were vitiated by physical illness, mental disorders, demonic suggestions, or a combination of these. Real witchcraft simply did not exist. 'Witches' were really those who,

> being by reason of their sex inconstant and uncertain in faith, and by their age not sufficiently settled in their minds, are much more subject to the devil's deceits, who, insinuating himself into their imagination, whether waking or sleeping, introduces all sorts of shapes, cleverly stirring up the humours and the spirits in this trickery.

The pact was a pure delusion, made while the humours were unsettled by atrabilious vapours, the senses filled with false appearances, and the mind dazzled by spirits.

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[12] Boguet, *Examen of witches,* 102,79-81.

[u] Allen G. Debus, *Man and Nature in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1978), 45; Thorndike, *History of Magic,* vi. 224.

[14] Boguet, *Examen of witches,* p. xli.

[15] *De praestigiis daemonum* was later revised and expanded, the fullest version being published at Basel in 1583. Weyer's other book on witchcraft, *De lamiis* (1577), is only a recapitulation of his earlier arguments.

Sabbats were dreams and the deeds committed at them were entirely imaginary. 'Witches were like those ecstatics who fell into trances and afterwards related their visions as matters of fact. Their predisposing condition was the product of psychological traits like fearfulness and despair, and illnesses like melancholy. All that Satan needed to do was to take advantage. They were 'drivelling old women ... into whose fantasy, being altogether drowsy and a suitable organ and fine seat for his works, the devil, who is a spirit, easily slides'.[16]

If there were no witches, there could be no bewitched. Weyer devoted a whole section of his book to showing that their afflictions were either attributable directly to devils, the result of non-demonic natural causes, or (less often) the occasion for fraud. Devils were perfectly capable of acting independently. Strictly speaking, their victims were more like demoniacs than sufferers from witchcraft, while witches, because they nevertheless believed that they caused all human misfortunes, were more an example of involuntary bewitchment than the conscious agents of it. Weyer argued that all instances of real *maleficium* were the immediate work of devils. Poisoning—albeit difficult to distinguish from other categories—might, of course, be within the physical capabilities of witches themselves. But for that very reason it turned them into something else—into poisoners. There was, said Weyer, a great difference between crimes that were, in principle, impossible for human agents to commit, and crimes that were not.

If there were no witches, there could also be no witch trials. Incapable of committing any physical crime called 'witchcraft', witches could only be guilty of spiritual faults. An impossibility in nature was an impossibility before the law. But Weyer did not really accept that they were guilty of anything at all, since this would presuppose elements of rational choice and intention in their behaviour which it did not, in fact, display. Unlike heretics, witches did not show' obstinacy of will; the heretics they resembled were those seduced into error by hercsiarchs. Unlike apostates and rebels, they had not entered effectively into any kind of conspiracy, for their contract with the devil must of necessity be null and void. Unlike the sane, they willed impossible things. For Weyer, they were themselves afflicted; 'our *Lainiae* whom we are here discussing lack the rational spirit required for "offending" ... and likewise they lack mind, will, reason, consent, deliberation, purpose and counsel.'[17] Only the skills of the physician and the instruction of the priest could possibly be relevant to their case. At the very most they deserved to be regarded only as potentially repentant sinners.

There is no doubting the importance of these arguments or the significance of their contribution to the witchcraft debate. Weyer saw clearly that the only way to expose the witch's lack of responsibility for any crime, spiritual as well as physical, was to claim wholesale delusion. Not merely the reality of the demonic pact but the genuineness of any intention could be undermined by demonstrating that they sprang from disordered or deceived minds. For clinical reasons he linked delusion to

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'* Johann Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum, et incantationibus, ac veneficiis* (Basel, 1583), 'Praefatio de totius operis argumento', 8 (this preface is not included in the 1991 translation).

" Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum* (1991 trans.), 572.

gender; but at least this led him to exclude all women from the witchcraft population In itself, this was a daring, and, in the circumstances, courageous conclusion to reach. Weyer had, in effect, introduced the insanity defence into cases of witchcraft, in so doing, 'fundamentally altering the terms of legal discourse from then on'.[18]

Nevertheless, as a piece of demonology, Weyer's route to this conclusion is much less striking. The novelty of *De praestigiis daemonum,* and the distance it opened up between sceptics and believers, can be exaggerated.[19] True, Weyer's overall approach was marked by naturalism, by a commitment to what could and could not be performed in the physical world known to him as a physician. He insisted that in all cases of alleged witchcraft the infallible rule was to determine not merely whether any loss or damage had been effected but whether it rozz/r/have been effected with the means used. In his view it could not, for (excluding the use of toxic substances) witchcraft was always characterized by spurious causation. As a product of (female) human agency it was always mythical; the real agency involved (and hence the real responsibility) was always demonic. But neither this naturalism itself nor the view of agency derived from it were at all unusual; indeed, they were equally important to a supporter of witchcraft prosecutions like Boguct. Many of the individual steps that Weyer took to discredit the powers of witches were, accordingly, a part of orthodox demonology and not a threat to it.

Weyer's view of the causation of storms, for example, was identical to Boguct's; both stressed the absurdity of supposing they could be brought by rituals and charms. Weyer, like Boguct, cited Della Porta on the chemistry of the witches' unguent and stressed its soporific and hallucinatory qualities. Boguet allowed for some dreamt sabbats; Weyer made them all imaginary, despite allowing devils the natural power to transvect humans bodily through the air.[20] Boguet allowed for demonic copulation, Weyer did not. But both denied the possibility of procreation in similar terms, and Weyer's explanation of the phantom pregnancy of a demoniac is similar to Boguet's of metamorphosis in its ingenuity.[21] On metamorphosis itself the two authors are in total agreement—as they are on the nature of demonic possession.

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[11] Midcifort, 'Johann Weyer and the Transformation of the Insanity Defense', 234-61, traces the sources of Weyer's arguments and their impact in German legal circles (quotation at 236).

” This is a point also made by Anglo, 'Melancholia and Witchcraft', in Gerlo (cd.), *Folic et deraison,* 210-12,221, who argues, in particular, that Weyer's medical views were neither novel nor convincing, and that his habits of mind and methods of argument were not radically different from those he attacked. The exaggerations originated in the discovery of Weyer by rationalist historians of psychology; see csp. E. E Withington, 'Dr. John Weyer and the Witch Mania', in C. Singer (ed.), *Studies in the History andMelhoJ of Science* (Oxford, 1917), 189-224; G. Zilboorg and G. W. Henry, *A History ofMedical Psychology* (Nc" York, 1941), 207-3S; G. Zilboorg, *The Medical Man and the Witch during the Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1935). They were continued in Trevor-Roper, 'European Witch-Craze', 73-5, but have been critically analysed by Nicholas P. Spanos, 'Witchcraft in Histories of Psychiatry: A Critical Analysis and an Alternative Conceptualization', *Psychological Bull.* 85 (1978), 417—39. For reassessments of Weyer, sec D- “ Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (London, 1958), 152-6; E. William M°n' ter, 'Inflation and Witchcraft: The Case of Jean Bodin', in T. K. Rabb and J. E. Seigel (eds.),zkZr<”‘ and *Conviction in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, 1969), 379-84; Christopher Baxter, 'Johann Weyer's *D[Praestigiis Daemonum:* Unsystematic Psychopathology', in Anglo (ed.), *Damned Art,* 53-75.

[20] Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum,* 197-201.

[21] Ibid. 261-2.

The essential point is that, like all orthodox writers on the subject, Boguet allowed for an important degree of delusion in witchcraft matters and conceded that confessions could contain impossibilities. When Weyer described the devil placing figures in the organs of the sense that appeared to be real objects in the external world, he was using a thoroughly familiar language. When he stressed the difficulty of separating the symptoms of demonic possession from those of melancholy, he was voicing a traditional disquiet. All who explored these topics used the same fundamental categories of analysis; Weyer only deployed the material with a fresh emphasis. His was undoubtedly the strongest version of the claim that witches were deluded. But it differed from normal demonological theory only in degree, not in kind. For, in sum, what he did was simply to extend the area of delusion to cover all rather than part of their confessions.

It is tempting to assume that Weyer nevertheless went further than others because he wished to remove the demonic pact from the realms of possibility altogether. But a whole book of *De praestigiis daemonum* is devoted to the problem of *magi infames* 'placing all manner of impostures variously before our eyes, using demonic means and determined study, and by the various masks of their divinations deceiving others and by their satanic tricks villainously searching into the divine teachings of medicine'.[22] Weyer plainly envisaged magic as a quite separate pursuit, undertaken by male intellectuals with the aim of effecting things beyond the ordinary scope of nature. Mostly these were impostures but the important concession was that the skill to perform them was learned from the devil and acquired during illicit consultations with evil spirits. Contemporary critics of Weyer, notably Erastus and Bodin, were quick to denounce this as an inconsistency. And it has been pointed out since that Weyer compromised his position fundamentally by granting the magician precisely that actual, non-delusive collusion with devils that he denied to the witch. Moreover, since this collusion was patently intentional—Weyer went out of his way to stress the pains taken by magicians to perfect their art—it also escaped his censures regarding the punishment of involuntary actions. Weyer not only implied the need for capital punishment for the highest grade of magician by mentioning the Mosaic penalties without dissent; he explicitly agreed to it when glossing the Hebrew word *mechassephim* in Exodus 7:7:

> people still have recourse to the claim that magical arts are surely punishable by death, and that since the efforts of the *Lamiae* are included in the same category, these women should suffer equal punishment. I do not deny the former point; in fact, I strongly support it in my writings. But in no way do I admit the attached conclusion, since there is a great difference between magicians and *Lamiae*.[21]

What was the difference, we may ask? The demonology was identical in the two cases; so was the natural philosophy. Only Weyer's clinical judgement, a fragile one in the circumstances of later sixteenth-century medicine, stood in the way of their assimilation. It was clinical experience (as well as binary thinking) that led him to speak of witches as solely feminine and magicians as solely male. But this stipulated the very thing that he wished to prove: that women could only suffer from demonic impostures, not promote them. By equating voluntary demonism with male magic and real *mateficium* with poisoning, Weyer made the argument for the demonic inspiration of‘witchcraft’ irrefutable—because he made it circular.

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[22] Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*^ cdn. of 1583, 'Pracfatio', 8.

[23] Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum,* 547. The charge of inconsistency is made by Anglo, 'Melancholia and Witchcraft', 213, but challenged by Midclfort, 'Johann Weyer and the Transformation of the Insanity Defense', 243-4 (Midelfort nevertheless admits that Weyer 'occasionally implied that the death penally was appropriate for [magicians]*, 249).

Nor should we ignore the very opening *of De praestigiis daemonum,* for here Weyer committed himself to a demonolog}' as traditional as anything found in the literature promoting witch trials. The work begins with a conventional history of the devil and an entirely orthodox account of what he could and could not do in his postlapsarian state, consistent with 'the divinely established order of nature'.[24] Like others Weyer complained that too much power was given to devils, who could only exercise 'the ordinary power derived from God and imparted to all things, to each in proportion to the terms of its existence'.[25] His aim was to reveal 'the impotence of the demon'[26] and his discussion ends with a long list of the usual demonic impossibilities. But there is another sense in which Weyer took considerable advantage of the devil's role as an agent. His devil is not merely powerful enough to promote all the*praestigiae* of the magicians; he is the supremely skilful trickster who preys on the fantasies of the senile and the sick, populates their bodies, sustains all the phenomena of witchcraft, and destroys the civil peace. He is, above all, the devil of Reformation theology'—an agent of retributive or probationary misfortune. Like most opponents of witch trials, Weyer needed the devil as badly as those he opposed.[27]

In the end, then, Weyer reached an undoubtedly arresting and challenging conclusion mainly by redeploying wholly familiar arguments. *De praestigiis daemonumxs* very much a pure demonology—a book about demons in which witchcraft is defined away in accordance with a medicine of gender. Thus its technical demonology may well have been of much less significance for Weyer's opposition to witch trials than his imaginative redeployment of Roman and canon legal arguments about insanity and his general attitude to religious deviance.[28] In this latter respect, one of the most crucial discussions of all occurs in a chapter entitled 'Erasmus's view on how to deal with heretics'. This consists of a long quotation from the *Apologia* where Erasmus defends the view that heretics ought not to suffer the death penalty, and that reconciliation is more important than retribution.[29] This undoubtedly matched Weyer's

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[24] Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonuni,* 86. [25] Ibid. 83. [24] Ibid. 84.

[21] Anglo, 'Melancholia and Witchcraft', 211-13, 217-18. Henry More was to comment that Weyer wished 'to load the Divcll as much as he [could], his shoulders being more able to bear it, and so to ease the Haggs.': id., *Antidote against at/ieisme,* 133.

[24] Midelfort, 'Johann Weyer and the T ransformation of the Insanity Defense', 239-48, establishes the crucial importance of both these elements of *De praestigiis daemonum.*

” Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum,* 529-35. For details of Weyer's 'Erasmianism', see Charles Bené, 'Jean Wier ct les procès de sorcellerie, ou l'érasmisme au service de la tolérance', in P. Tuynman, G. C-Kuiper, and E. Kessler (eds.), *Acta conventus neo-latini Amstelodamensis* (Munich, 1979), 58-73, and for proposals concerning witches, but it owed nothing to demonology or to decisions about causation in nature. It suggests rather that Weyer was inspired to attack the prosecution of witches by precisely those ideals of moderation, even toleration, that the period that experienced it swept away. In the religious history of Europe 1563 was not an auspicious year for Erasmianism.

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The demonological proximity of two individual writers as apparently opposed as Boguet and Weyer serves as a detailed illustration of the lack of real polarization in witchcraft writings. At the level of causal explanation—at the level of science—belief and scepticism could clearly coexist. But this in turn suggests a rereading of the more general history of scepticism and a way of accounting for the extraordinary longevity of demonology. Precisely because it could embrace a variety of opinions, absorbing and expressing doubt as occasion demanded, demonology proved to be intellectually resilient. A less flexible body of ideas would have been brittle when attacked and vulnerable to erosion. Conversely, critics of witch trials were in a relatively weak position because so many of their arguments were already anticipated by those who promoted them. Some sceptical arguments were more telling than others; but what governed their success was not conformity to modern criteria of good sense, but the ability to dislodge the entrenched assumptions of contemporaries. And here, opposition to witch prosecutions on purely demonological grounds—as opposed to either methodological doubts about the biblical and other evidence in support of witchcraft's reality, or legal misgivings about the conduct of investigations and trials—was always limited in what it could achieve. A good way to illustrate this is to take the case of what happened in Germany after Weyer. For what needs to be explained here is the relative eclipse of his demonological arguments after 1600 and the greater impact of those critics who, by the 1630s, had come to adopt a different intellectual strategy?[0]

Certainly, many of Weyer's misgivings were voiced by other Germans, along with the idea that medically certified insanity could constitute a legel defence. Almost immediately they were echoed by the Lemgo preacher Jodocus Hocker in his *Der teufel selbs* and by his collaborator Hermann Hamelmann?[1] In the 1580s and 1590s they gained further support from the physician Johann Ewich, the Heidelberg professor Hermann Witekind, Conradus ab Anten of Lübeck, and the Rostock jurist Johann Georg Godelmann. These authors all shared Weyer's view that witches were incapable of causing any physical damage by 'witchcraft'—in which case, they were

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the 'Erasmianism' in the duchy of Cleves during Weyer's service there, Jean-Claude Margolin, 'La Politique culturelle de Guillaume, due de Cleves', in F. Simone (ed.), *Culture etpolitique en France d l epoque de Phumanisme et de la Renaissance* (Turin, 1974), 293-324.

[10] For the distinction between demonological, methodological, and legal scepticism, and for a slightly fuller account of what follows, see Stuart Clark, 'Glaube und Skepsis in der deutschcn Hexenlitcratur von Johann Weyer bis Friedrich von Spee', in Hartmut Lehmann and Otto Ulbricht (eds.), Fbm *Unfug des Hexen-Processes: Gegner der Hexenverfolgung von Johann Weyer bis Friedrich von Spee* (Wiesbaden, 1992), 15-33.

” Hocker, *Der teufel selbs,* fos. cxiiii'-cxxii'; Hamelmann contributed several chapters to this work.

innocent of the crime—and that if they did cause any by other means, they simply became felons or murderers. Witekind captured the principle neatly when he insisted, ‘they are human beings, and they remain human beings, and cannot now bring any more injuries or benefits, either by words or deeds, than they could before they joined themselves in league and society with the spirits.’ A witch, he remarked with dry humour, ‘cannot take the milk from your cow, any more than any other person, unless she is there with her pail to milk it’.[32] Misfortunes plainly beyond the powers of any human being to inflict were either caused naturally or were directly attributable to devils; and in both cases their original inspiration was providential. It was particularly insulting to God, wrote Conradus ab Anten, to blame decrepit old women for the doings of the Divine Majesty.[33]

There was also agreement with Weyer’s view that the intention to seek demonic help or the achieving of it by a real pact were (in the case of women) delusions brought on by natural pathology and/or diabolical deception. Ewich brought his own clinical findings to its support. Hocker and Witekind said that witches imagined that they could cause damage by words or sympathetic magic, bring storms, and attend sabbats, but that all this had been put into their heads by devils. And when Godelmann came to define *lamiae* he was really only standardizing Weyer’s idea of the witch—the ignorant and melancholic old woman who was simply the victim of her own disordered mind and the devil’s trickery, and whose pact was entirely delusive. It followed for these writers, as for Weyer, that ‘witchcraft’ was better dealt with by clergymen and physicians than in the courts. Witekind again cited with approval the view of Alciatus that witches ought to be purged with hellebore rather than fire.[3]’ Godelmann believed that, for the most part, *lamiae* needed medical treatment and the chance to repent. The crucial judicial criterion for capital punishment must, as the imperial law code, the *Carolina,* demanded, be the doing of real harm. It was up to the witchcraft theorists to say whether the harm alleged was possible or impossible for human beings to commit.[35]

By 1600, then, attempts had been made in Germany to undermine the very basis of witchcraft beliefs and to question whether witchcraft was a crime for which any human agent could be held responsible. And, like Weyer’s, they were conducted at the level of theology’ and natural philosophy. With the exception of serious misgivings about the water ordeal, scepticism concerning the actual procedures adopted in witchcraft trials was not prominent (it was not prominent in *Depraestigiis daemonum)* and only Johannes Fichard, Dietrich Graminaeus, and Otto Melander concentrated on it.[36] Yet by the 1620s and 1630s, despite some further support from studies of fas-

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[12] Witekind, *Christlich Bedcncken unnd Erinnerung von Zauberey,* 9, 51; ibid., pp. iii-xxxi, fora" account of Witekind.

[33] Conradus ab Anten, *Gynaikolousis; seu, muherum lavatio, quam purgationem per aquam frigid^ vocant. Item vulgaris de potentia lamiarum opinio, quod utraque Deo, naturae omni iuri et probatae consul dinisit contraria,* 2nd edn. (Lübeck, 1593), sig. D5*.

[M] Witekind, *Christlich Bedencken.* 117; cf. Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum.* 357; see also 541-2.

[35] Godelmann, *Tractatus,* bk. 3,137-45.

[36] Johannes Fichard, *Consilia* (Frankfurt/Main, 1590), bk. 2, nos. 107, 111, 113, 116, 120, 124,125;

cination and the delusive powers of the imagination,[37] Weyer's arguments were in abeyance and the witchcraft debate in Germany had become essentially legal and jurisprudential in character.[38] The questions now being asked by opponents of witch trials concerned rules of criminal procedure and points of law. Did not the fact that witchcraft was *crimen exceptum* imply stricter limits to the discretion of judges and greater control over the influence of clerics? Could the use of torture ever yield results that were not prejudicial to the accused? Was not the protection of the innocent more important as a criterion of justice than the punishment of the guilty? And should not many of those convicted of witchcraft suffer milder penalties than was customary?

More striking still, it was now possible to take a radically sceptical position concerning these legal issues while remaining indifferent to the demonological problems posed earlier by Weyer and his followers. This was the position taken by the four major opponents of witch trials in the early decades of the new century: Adam Tanner, Paul Laymann, Friedrich von Spec, and Johann Matthäus Meyfart. Each concentrated on the conduct of the trials according to the standards of natural reason and equity. Each lamented the lack of safeguards for the innocent, demanded procedural changes at every point in the legal process, especially in the use of torture, and insisted that investigations cease until the practical difficulties of evaluating prima-facic evidence and securing reliable testimony were overcome. But none of them ruled out the possibility of true convictions. Each assumed (in print at least) that there was such a crime as witchcraft, involving real contact with demons, and that men and women were capable of it and could properly be found guilty of it. Spec and Meyfart criticized ordinary Germans for attributing all their misfortunes, and the good fortunes of others, to witchcraft, thereby detracting from providence and implicating innocents. But to neither was it a crucial point. Delusion appeared occasionally in these later texts but only as a reason for regarding revelations about the sabbat with caution, not as a threat to the entire reality of witchcraft. The purely imaginary crimes of *lamiae* were allowed for by Theodor Thumm at Tübingen and Hermann Samson at Riga, as well as by Meyfart at Erfurt, but (as we shall see) in such a way as to dilute the original concept. Otherwise, those others who had doubts about witch trials in these decades were mostly sceptical on legal grounds; for example, Johannes Greve, Konrad Hartz, Johann Jordanaeus, Justus Oldekop, and the author of *Processus juridicus contra sagas el veneficos.*[39]

Dietrich Graminaeus, *Inductio sive directorium: Das ist: Anleitung oder underweisung, u>ie ein Richter in Criminal und peinlichen sachen die Zauberer and Hexen belangendt, sich zuverhalten, tend der gebiir darnit zuverfahren haben soil* (Cologne, 1594); Otto Mclander, *Resolutio praecipuarum quaestionurn criminalis adversus sagas processus* (Lich, 1597).

[37] Sec notably Tandler, *Dissertatio de fascino et incantatione,* followed in the Wittenberg editions of 1606 and 1613 by Hieronymus Nymann, *Oratio de imaginatione* and Martin Biermann, *De magicis actionibus exetasis succincta.*

[38] Many of Weyer's arguments were, however, repeated by the anonymous author of *Malleusjudicum, das ist: Gesetzhammer der unbarmherzigen Hexenrichter (\(>27),rcpr.* in Johann Reiche (cd.), *Unterschiedliche Schrijften von Unfug des Hexen-Processes* (Halle, 1703), 1-48 (summary in Lea, *Materials,* ii. 690-6).

[39] Johannes Greve, *Tribunal reformatuni, in quo sanioris et tulioris justitiae via, judici Christiano in processu criminale commonslratur, rejecta et fugata tortura, cuius iniquitatem, multiplicemfallaciam, atque*

This demonological conservatism is well illustrated in the case of Tanner, who taught theology at Munich and Ingolstadt and whose *Theologia scliolaslica* was one of the great Catholic *summae of* the early seventeenth century. His *Tractatus theologies de processu adverstts crimina excepta* is essentially a study of the injustices committed during witch trials. But it takes for granted the reality and heinousness of witchcraft and even attacks those sceptics who denied 'the crimes of witches and especially their bodily transport and their commerce with the demon'.[40] Tanner wanted a reformed judicial code but not any lessening of severity 'lest the simple should conceive that the crime does not exist' and the honour of God go unvindicated.[41] Moreover, his specialist work on demonology, the *Disputatio de angelis,* reveals the arguments of an utter traditionalist. Again he distanced himself from those who, like Weyer, believed that the sabbat was always a delusion. The true (and Catholic) view was that, in addition to the many imaginary episodes, 'the devil frequently carries the witches to their conventions truly and in a bodily manner.'[42] Both theology and physics allowed for this and the 'constant and concordant confessions of witches' confirmed it.[43] On every other aspect of the subject—metamorphosis, control of the weather, the assumption of shapes, and so on—Tanner's views are just as conventional. Indeed, there is nothing in the *Disputatio* that could not also have been found in many standard accounts of demonism and witchcraft which asked for just the sort of witchcraft-prosecuting that Tanner deplored.

Utter distaste for the legal treatment of witches and grave doubts about the possibility of arriving at guilty verdicts did not prevent Laymann, another academic philosopher and theologian, from believing that there were witches. It was the essential obscurity of the crime and the difficulty of proving it that made him an opponent of witch trials, not any misgivings about its possibility. And, as with Tanner, we do not have to look very far elsewhere in Laymann's writings to find complete demonological orthodoxy. In the chapter 'De magia' in his *Theologia moralis* he divided magic conventionally between its natural and demonic branches and argued that the second could be practised in open, as well as implied, alliance with devils.[44] Even

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illicitum inter Christianos usum, libera el necessaria dissertatione aperuit (Hamburg, 1624), bk. 1, chs. 6-7, bk-2, chs. 1-4; Konrad Hartz, *Tractatus eriminalis theorico-practicus, dereorum, inprimisquevenejicarum, tnquisitione juridice instituenda, in foro haud minus, quam scliolis apprime ulilis et jucundus* (Marburg, 1634); id-> *Tractatus eriminalis de veneficarum inquisitione,* 2nd cdn. (Rinteln, 1639); Johann Jordanaeus, *Disputatio brevis et categorica de proba stigmatica utrum scilicet ea licita sit, rtecne* (Cologne, [1630]); Justus Oldekop, *Cautelarum criminalium syllagoge practica, in qua consiliariis et malefriorum judicibus aeque, atque advocaUS scilu utiles et pemecessariae admonitiones in materia criminali praescribuntur* (Brunswick, 1633), enlarged edn. pub. at Hildesheim, 1639, and as *Observationes criminalespracticae congestae* at Bremen, 1654; Anon., *Processus juridicus contra sagas et veneficos. Das ist, Ein Rechllicher Process gegen die Unholden unJ Zauberische Personen* (Cologne, 1629).

[40] *Tinner, Tractatus theologicus, 3^1.* [41] Ibid. 44.

[41] Adam Tanner, *Depotentia loco rnotiva angelorum,* extracted from id., *Disputatio de angelis* (1617), >^{n} *Diversi tractatus,* 61.

[41] Ibid. 62. On Tanner, see Wolfgang Behringer, 'Zur Haltung Adam Tanners in der Hexenfragc. D^{IC} Entstehung einer Argumentationsstrategie in ihrem gesellschaftlichen Kontext', in Lehmann and Ulbricht (eds.), Pom *Unfug des Hexen-Processes,* 161-85.

[44] Paul Laymann, *Tractatus alter theologicus de sagis et veneficis,* originally included in id., *Theology*

Spec and Meyfart, whose attacks on the German witch trials were among the most sustained and the most eloquent, never denied the reality of witchcraft. Spee acknowledged it at the outset, called it a compendium of all the most enormous sins, and insisted on the reform, not the abandonment, of witch prosecutions. He even claimed that he had *indicia* that 'those inquisitors who declared that Tanner should be tortured were certainly *malejici.*[ui] This extraordinary statement is simply the exact obverse of the familiar accusation made by orthodox theorists that the sceptics were themselves closet witches. It does not suggest that Spee had fully rejected either the demonological presuppositions of witch prosecutions or the polemical habits of mind that accompanied them. Regarding legal policy the Lutheran pastor Johann Matthäus Meyfart (theology professor at the Casimir *Gymnasium* at Coburg and then at Erfurt university) was significantly more demanding than Spee. Confident in the efficacy of Christ's own justice at the imminent Second Coming, he asked for the immediate cessation of all trials. Yet on demonological matters he was even more cautious. He allowed for the imaginary witchcraft of'melancholics' but also for the real witchcraft of those who 'not only knowingly and deliberately strike an agreement with Satan, but also serve the Devil in this matter, to inflict the gravest injuries on men, beasts, and crops'. And although he was certain that many of the details of sabbat behaviour were improbable, he nevertheless thought it wise not to doubt them all.[46]

It seems, then, that Germany's most outspoken critics of witch trials—theologians, be it noted, not professional lawyers—had no wish to challenge the demonological foundations on which they ultimately rested. In some of their main arguments they even reaffirmed them. It was the devil, they urged, who was responsible for plaguing German society with the inhumanities of the trials. Meyfart, whose *Christliche erinnerung* was in many ways a study of the social and moral chaos caused by excessive religious zeal, said that it could be blamed on a demonic attempt to subvert Christian commonwealths. He and Friedrich von Spee both argued that torture was a demonic invention, and Spee even said that some of Germany's most vigorous magistrates were agents of Satan, planted like judicial moles to save real witches and condemn the innocent.[47] Above all, the devil was badly needed to explain why innocent people were implicated in witchcraft at all. Their 'appearance' at sabbats (and, therefore, in the testimony of witches) had to be allowed for in order for miscarriages of justice to occur and be attacked, but it also had to be attributed to a

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moralis (Munich, 1625) and repr. in *Diversi trac talus,* 99-112 (2nd pagination); cf. Laymann on magic in the enlarged cdn. of *Theologia moralis* (Antwerp, 1634), 738-40.

[45] [Spec], *Cautio criminalis,* 69.

[44] Meyfart, *Hochwichtige Hexen-Erinnerung,* 61, 217. On Meyfart see Christian Hallier, *Johann Matthäus Meyfart. Ein Schriftsteller, Pddagoge und Theologe des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Neumünster, 1982), 66-71 and, on Meyfart's eschatology, 47-59. The connection between the latter and Mcyfart's views on witchcraft is explored in Hartmut Lehmann, 'Johann Matthäus Meyfart wamt hexenverfolgende Obrigkeiten vor dem Jiingsten Gericht', in Lehmann and Ulbricht (eds.), *Vom Unfug des Hexen-Processes,* 223-9.

[47] [Spec], *Cautio criminalis,* 48.

demonic deception in order for their innocence to be preserved. In this particular respect, at least, sceptics like Tanner, Spee, and Meyfart were more, not less, dependent on the beliefs of those they otherwise condemned.[41] * * * * * * [48]

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Why was the legacy of Weyer relatively meagre? The answer is, of course, complex and depends on far more than the logic of ideas. The changing pace of prosecutions may itself have forced more and more attention on the conduct of trials. Tanner had seen them at first hand in Dillingen, Schongau (probably), and Ingolstadt; Spec in the Rhineland; and Meyfart at Coburg in Franconia. What they heard in the confessional was evidently influential with the three Catholics, notably Laymann. The hardening of denominational positions also made it impossible for Catholic writers to use arguments tainted with heresy.[49] Even so, the internal cogency of demonological scepticism must have had some bearing on its fortunes. It seems reasonable to suppose that its relative decline resulted, in part at least, from the fact that it was not, after all, a very effective form of doubt. If it had challenged the intellectual basis of witchcraft prosecutions in any fundamental way, a passionate opponent like the Lutheran Meyfart would surely not have neglected it, free as he was to follow Weyer's reasoning. The fact that he did neglect it suggests that in Germany, as elsewhere in Europe, it was much more difficult for critics to distance themselves intellectually from orthodox demonology than to pick holes in particular trial procedures and investigative techniques on largely technical grounds.

What, after all, could they do when so many of their arguments were already allowed for in the very belief system whose penal and juridical implications they deplored? If they pointed out, as Witekind insistently did, that witches were in fact powerless, so too did the defenders of witch trials. 'Scarce is there a person of good Sense', wrote Balthasar Bckker, looking back over early modern demonology, 'that believes they are efficacious of themselves, but they will have it to be effected by the Devil, who operates all that those miserable wretches imagine to act.'[50] One of the most sustained and emphatic statements of this principle came (as we have already seen) in the *Repetitio disputalionis de lamiis sue strigibus* by Thomas Erastus, a work directed explicitly against Weyer.[51] And in Germany, in particular, the fact that witches themselves could do nothing beyond their natural human powers, and were in that sense invariably wrongly accused, was a matter almost of faith (because it was theologically derived) to the many Lutherans who wrote on the subject.[52] Clearly, powerlessness was not the crucial issue—otherwise, orthodox witchcraft theory would have been untenable and all those who adopted it would have had to oppose witchcraft prosecutions or express reservations about them. The real crime was dealing with devils; the apostasy of the demonic pact and the evil intentions it presupposed were far more heinous than any physical hurt and could easily merit death even if none was caused.[51] * [53]

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[41] Tanner, *Tractatus theologian,* 17; [Spec], *Caulio criminalis,* 331—4; Meyfart, *Hochwichtige Hexen-Erinnerung,* 227—38. Cf. *Malleus judicum,* 12—16.

” Wolfgang Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern: Volksmagie, Glaubenseifer und Staatsrdson in d<’ Frühen Neuzeit* (Munich, 1987), 225-30.

[50] Bekker, *World bewitch'd,* 232.

[51] For further similar statements, see also Thomas Erastus, *Disputationurn de medecina nova PhiiipP[1] Paracelsiparsprima* (Basel, n.d. [1572?]), 107,194,201-2,210.

” For fuller treatment, see below, Ch. 34.

But if the critics countered with the claim that dealing with devils was itself delusory, they still found themselves pushing at a half-open door. We have seen that all orthodox theorists, inside and outside Germany, allowed for an important measure of delusion in witchcraft matters. They were well aware that confessions could contain impossible feats, that the illusions of the devil could be mistaken for reality, that unfamiliar but quite undemonic natural contingencies, or even startling technological achievements, could be blamed on demonism, and that hallucinatory experiences stemming from ordinary diseases or narcotics could be wrongly attributed to witchcraft or lead to sensations of being a witch. Fraudulent phenomena were especially necessary to make sense of the sabbat, sexual congress with devils, and metamorphosis. Since medieval and Renaissance natural philosophy placed demonic actions within the natural order, scepticism concerning those that appeared to transgress that order was a way of saving, not undermining, the overall credibility of the beliefs involved.

The scope left for opposition to witch trials on demonological grounds was not, therefore, great. Since no ordinary theorist admitted the possibility of spiritual attendance at sabbats, miscegenation, or real transmutation, denying them could not in itself turn anyone into a sceptic. For this reason there are striking discrepancies in the anonymous *Malleusjtidicum (\627),* which ends with an outspoken denunciation of the abuses of witch trials but opens with a discussion of things that it was impossible for witches to perform that could have been found in dozens of conventional demonologies of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[54] Both defenders and opponents said that some sabbats were real and others were imaginary. Between Philipp Ludwig Elich and Wilhelm Adolf Scribonius, who thought that the sabbat was mostly true but occasionally a dream, Hermann Samson and Theodor Thumm, who thought it was mostly false but occasionally true, and Hocker, Anton Praetorius, and Witckind, who thought it was a dream but could be true if the devil wished it to be, there was hardly an unbridgeable intellectual gulf. We have seen that, even in its strongest version, the claim that witches were deluded differed from normal demonological theory in degree only. Godelmann repeated Weyer's distinction between magicians *(praestigiatores, necromantici, arioli, incantatores, venejici,* and *sortilegi)* and witches *(larniae)* without seeing that it was merely definitional. It is indicative of uncertainty, and of the proximity of scepticism and belief, that he should have gone on to undermine Weyer’s case by conceding that *lamiae* might confess to possible sorcery after all, and so become liable to capital punishment.[55]

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[51] Conversely, for those not prepared to accept the element of apostasy in witchcraft, the witch's powerlessness was proof enough of lack of culpability—esp. where the law, as in England, required proof of physical *maleficium;* see, for example, [Filmer], *Advertisement,* 7-8.

[M] *Malleus judicum,* compare 26—41 and 2-18. Foran ascription to Cornelius Pleier, town physician in Kitzingen, sec Gunther Franz, 'Der *Malleus Judicum, Das ist: Gesetzhammer der unbarmhertzigen Hexenrichter* von Cornelius Pleier im Vergleich mit Friedrich Spees *Cautio Criminalis',* in Lehmann and Ulbricht (eds.), Pom *Unfug des Hexen-Processes,* 201-3.

Opponents of witch trials could in theory have gained perhaps their most significant results by demanding religious counselling and medical care for those who fell into the category of *lamiae.* But if in practice it was difficult to say just who these were—if it was a matter for diagnosis rather than a matter of principle that a witch might be deluded—this too was not a decisive advantage. All contributors to the field of demonolog}’, whether we call them ‘believers’ or ‘doubters’, had to differentiate demonic from non-demonic, true from illusory phenomena; allocating individual aspects of witchcraft was always more a question of emphasis than of dogma. Eventually, this was reflected in the emergence in Lutheran Germany of a three-way distinction, in which the contrast between the real perpetration of a crime by physical means and the delusory experiences of the *lamiae* lost something of its force. Samson, Thumm, and Meyfart, for example, each divided witches into those whose actions were impossibilities and melancholic self-delusions, those who made the demonic pact and committed real *maleficium,* and those who made it but did no damage. Meyfart wrote of these categories:

> Those who are melancholic cannot be punished by the secular magistrate, for the thing that afflicts them is not villainy but sickness. Those who commit murder and injury should be removed from our midst. But as for those who really do stand in league with the devil, yet attempt no murder or injury, most of our theologians have suggested a milder and more lenient judgement.[56]

This was a compromise solution to the problems of causation and culpability; the fact that the pact remained as a possibility at all indicates the difficulty of arriving at outright scepticism on demonological grounds. According to Samson, he was advocating it in Riga in the 1620s as a Lutheran orthodoxy. But this too is significant, for in every other respect he regarded witchcraft in entirely traditional terms.

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This survey of the witchcraft debate in one area of Europe confirms what has been the argument of this and the previous chapter—that orthodox witchcraft theory was not as closed, and scepticism not as open, as has often been assumed. By the end of the 1630s Germany demonology had evidently absorbed one of Weyer’s key doctrines, rendered it relatively harmless, and restored intellectual consensus to its former level. For this reason, scepticism shifted in emphasis towards the legal and juridical spheres. Here, greater success could be achieved by an intellectually more modest campaign—a campaign that left the fundamentals of demonology largely intact but gradually made it impossible in practical terms to secure a conviction against any particular witch. In Germany, as in France and England, the educated

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” Godelmann, *Tractatus,* bk. 3,142-3.

[56] Meyfart, *Hochroichtige Hexen-Erinnerung,* 61; cf. Samson, *Neun ... Hexen Predigt,* sigs. Xii’-Xi’• Thumm, *Tractatus theologian,* 91-107. The third category of‘witch’ was, of course, allowed for in ln^c imperial law code (the *Carolina)* promulgated by Charles V in 1532.

élite was allowed to go on believing in witchcraft in principle while gradually coming to doubt the evidence for any individual instance of it. Indeed, the demonological debate itself continued to animate European intellectuals, even though actual witch prosecutions lost momentum. In the scientific circles of Restoration England, in the dissertations submitted in the later seventeenth century at the German and Scandinavian universities, and in the controversies concerning the views of Balthasar Bekker and Christian Thomasius, the issues we have been examining were still being argued out—in the case of Bekker long after witchcraft prosecutions had been abandoned in the Dutch Republic.

Not only had they not been resolved; they could not be resolved. To deny absolutely any contact between humans and devils would certainly have removed the causal basis of magic and witchcraft altogether and reduced all confessions (from both sexes) to delusions. But physical contact was plausible as long as devils had that existence in the world that early modern natural philosophy gave them. And spiritual contact was a prerequisite of Christianity itself and of the whole history of heresy; to deny it, said William Perkins in England, would mean giving up the possibility of covenants with God.[57] That is why spritual apostasy alone, irrespective of real *maleficium,* was so awful a sin for many witchcraft authors, especially the Protestants among them. The only logical alternative left was to remove devils from the physical world altogether and turn spiritual demonism into a metaphor. The first of these seems to have been contemplated by Cornelius Loos of Gouda, a Catholic priest and theologian at the universities of Mainz and Trier. The sixteen articles that he was forced to recant at Trier in 1593 suggest that he went as far as to deny any physical existence (certainly, presence) to demons, a far more daring step than anything found cither in Weyer, whose other arguments he sympathized with, or in the later German texts.[58]

Reginald Scot, the Englishman, attempted both, which helps to explain his reputation as the most radical sceptic of the entire period.[59] It is sometimes suggested that this radicalism stemmed simply from naturalism; in particular, his view that, since miracles had ceased and all created things were left with only their natural capacities, all causation must also be natural. But, apart from the fact that the cessation of miracles was a Protestant commonplace, we can now see that this argument would only have begged the more fundamental question of what counted as a natural capacity. Since orthodox theorists of witchcraft themselves endowed devils with such capacities, it was hardly a sceptical stance that posed a threat to them. As Meric Casaubon was to say: naturalism was no help to atheists if‘the operations of Daemons’ were ‘kept within the bound of things Natural’.[60] In fact, Scot's most telling argument was his reduction (in a ‘Discourse on divels’ added to his *Discoverie of witchcraft)* of all demonic agents to a non-corporeal condition, thus removing them from physical nature altogether.[61] As one astute contemporary remarked, this ‘hittcth the nayleon the head with a witnesse’.[62] Had it become general, it would not merely have pre-empted the intricate and inconclusive task of separating the demonic from the non-demonic and the actual from the illusory; it would also have destroyed at one blow the very essence of magic and witchcraft. As it was, Scot’s arguments were far too subversive of prevailing intellectual patterns and habits of mind and it was more thana century before they began to gain currency, helped considerably by the similar claims of Balthasar Bekkcr.[63] In the short term, Scot’s very extremism blunted his impact.

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[57] Perkins, *Discourse,* 189-90.

[58] Lea, *Materials,* ii. 602-3; Loos's *De vera et falsa magia* was partially printed at Cologne in 1592, the rest remaining in MS. Other details in Emil Zenz, 'Cornelius Loos—ein Vorläufer Friedrich von Spees im Kampf gegen den Hexenwahn', *Kurtrierfahrbuch,* 21 (1981), 146-53.

[59] For this estimation, sec Anglo, 'Melancholia and Witchcraft', 218-22; id., 'Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft:* Scepticism and Sadduceeism', in id. (ed.), *Damned Art,* 106-39.

[60] Casaubon, *Treatise proving spirits, witches and supernatural operations,* 133.

But we should not forget, finally, that there was another form of extremism at the other end of the demonological spectrum that was just as subversive. It was the view of Jean Bodin that it was wrong to doubt anything in this area of knowledge, since it was an impiety to place any limits in advance, so to speak, on what it was possible for witches and demons to do. This was because they were not governed by the laws of nature after all; their actions belonged to supernature, not nature, and unless mortals wished to challenge divine omniscience by giving a reason for everything, they had to be taken on trust. One must simply observe something as puzzling as metamorphosis, said Bodin, and, acknowledging both the feebleness of the human mind and the overriding need for faith, leave the cause to God:

> Men, who have the fear of God, after having observed the stories of sorcerers, and contemplated the marvels of God throughout the world, and read carefully the laws and the sacred histories, will call into doubt none of the things that seem unbelievable to human sense, judging that if many natural things are incredible and others incomprehensible, all the more reason that the powers of the supernatural intelligences and the actions of spirits are incomprehensible.[64]

In this view, to apply the language of physical events to (what Bodin called) ‘metaphysical’ operations was a fundamental category error. Yet this obliterated one of the

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[41] This is well recognized by West, *Reginald Scot,* preface and 86-94.

[M] Gabriel Harvey, *The Works of Gabriel Harvey,* ed. A. B. Grosart (3 vols.;n.p., 1884-5), ii. 291 (not referring to any particular argument of Scot’s).

[41] See esp. the arguments for the disembodied character of spirits and the consequent impossibility of the demonic pact in the 2nd and 3rd vols. of Bekker’s *De betoverde weereld,* which I have consulted in the French trans.: *Le Monde enchante; ou, Examen des communs sentiment touchant les esprits, leur nature, l'ur pouvoir, leur administration, et leurs operations. El touchant les efels que les hommes sont capable! de proJuirt par leur communication et leur vertu, divise en quatre parties* (4 vols.; Amsterdam, 1694); cf. id., ‘An abridgement of the whole work’, in *World bewitch'd,* sigs. c6’-d4'. On Bekkcr, see G. J. Stronks, ‘The Significance of Balthasar Bekker’s The Enchanted World’, in M. Gijswijt-Hofstra and W. Frijhoflf (eds.), *Witchcraft in the Netherlands from the Fourteenth to the Twentieth Century,* trans. R. M. J. van der Wilden-Fall (Rotterdam, 1991), 149-56; and, stressing the importance of Bekker’s Cartesianism, Robin Attfield, ‘Balthasar Bekker and the Decline of the Witch-Craze: The Old Demonology and the New Philosophy’, *Annals of Science,* 42 (1985), 383-95.

[64] Bodin, *Demonomanie,* preface, see also fos. 239’~40·1 244', 245', 247*. On these aspects of Bodin s demonology, see Andre Petitat, ‘Un systeme de preuve empirico-metaphysique: Jean Bodin et la sorcellerie demoniaque’, *Revue europeenne des sciences sociales,* 30 (1992), 39-78, esp. 41-7.

distinctions that enabled other writers of demonology to make sense of the world. Although one or two followed Bodin, most rejected the latitude of belief to which his view gave rise.[65] Their case was, moreover, the case of natural philosophy as a whole—that is, until the onset of probabilism and mitigated scepticism lent unexpected support to the notion of suspended disbelief. As Jean de Nynauld remarked (significantly, in a study of lycanthropy), Bodin's position made all ordinary learning impossible, since 'all means for separating the false from the true would be taken away' if it was admitted that tomorrow the world might, with God's permission, be qualitatively different/'[6] The Helmstedt professor Martin Biermann, in a set of theses attacking Bodin, made this a point of principle; 'magical actions and motions', he argued, must be 'reducible to considerations of physics.'[67]

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[45] For a follower, see Crespct, *Deux Livres,* fo. 305'–'. For Bodin's critics, see Jonathan L. Pearl, 'Humanism and Satanism: Jean Bodin's Contribution to the Witchcraft Crisis', *Canadian Rev. Sociology and Anthropology,* 19 (1982), 541-8. See also on witchcraft in Bodin's natural philosophy, Houdard, *Sciences du Diable,* 58-67.

[M] Nynauld, *De la lycanthropie,* 110.

[47] Martin Biermann, *proponens* (Johann a Petkum, *respondens), De ntagicis actionibus exetasis succincta: sententiaej. Bodini... opposita* (Helmstedt, 1590), sig. A3^{f}–*.

14

Natural Magic

> And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.
>
> (Exodus 7:10-11)

> Magick is a faculty of wondcrfull vertue, full of most high mysteries, containing the most profound Contemplation of most secret things, together with the nature, power, quality, substance, and vertues thereof, as also the knowledge of whole nature, and it doth instruct us concerning the differing, and agreement of things amongst themselves, whence it produceth its wonderfull effects, by uniting the vertues of things through the application of them one to the other, and to their inferior sutable subjects, joyning and knitting them together throughly by the powers, and vertues of the superior Bodies. This is the most perfect, and chief Science, that sacred, and sublimer kind of Phylosophy, and lastly the most absolute perfection of all most excellent Philosophy.
>
> (Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa [von Netteshcim], *Three books ofoccult philosophy)*

DESPITE this long excursus on the resilience of witchcraft theory, there is a good deal more to be said about what could possibly have dislodged it. The very inconclusiveness of the arguments suggests that, as far as the natural philosophy of the matter was concerned, the only way to make the devil fully redundant was to reorganize natural knowledge on entirely different principles. This was the case with purist versions of the 'new philosophy'—whereas the impure versions, as we shall eventually see, could go on accommodating demonic agency on scientific, as well as theological, grounds. But it has also been maintained that, without going this far, philosophers could scale down demonic causation, or at least sidestep it, simply by stressing the extent to which nature produced its own wonderful effects or could be encouraged to do so with human assistance. It is time, then, to return to the question left suspended at the end of Chapter 12; how did witchcraft theorists deal with the fourth and final possibility allowed for by their explanatory grid, and the one apparently most threatening to their own beliefs—the existence of non-demonic natural causes for real *mira?*

In effect, this brings us to the subject of 'natural magic'. For in early modern Europe, as in the normal science of the preceding period, 'magic' was the term given to the study and manipulation of many of those phenomena that we have been calling preternatural, and demonic magic and ‘natural magic’ were its two branches. And it was natural magic that, according to some modern accounts, provided sceptical contemporaries with alternative explanations for witchcraft phenomena, even before the onset of the new philosophy. But was the demonic agency of the first branch of magic in competition with and, thus, replaceable by, the natural agency of the second? And was this, as is claimed, one of the reasons for the decline of witchcraft beliefs? Or was there a kind of strengthening symbiosis at work, whereby the credibility of demonology could be prolonged by natural magic’s growing popularity in scientific circles? These are the issues that will concern us in this and the following chapter. The first thing to do is simply to take account of natural magic’s importance for Neoplatonists and so-called Hermetic thinkers, like Agrippa, for a reformer like Bacon, and, more significantly, for the large and still influential body of traditional natural philosophers with modified scholastic tastes. After that, we will be better able to gauge how far demonology was threatened, and how far sustained, by its ontological and epistemological partner.

* * *

‘Magic’, even more than ‘occult’, is a word that is indispensable to the history of early modern natural philosophy and, yet, rendered almost unusable by its connotations. So persistently has it been associated with habits of mind and behaviour that modern Western rationality finds wrong-headed and embarrassing, that, until recently, its adoption has virtually always implied refusal. Along with philosophers and anthropologists, historians have themselves been responsible for this. But so, of course, was early modern Europe; indeed, in the biography of this particular idea it has the most formative place of all.[1] In religious as well as scientific contexts ‘magic’ became so disreputable that it has had a negative image ever since. For us to describe an aspect of any culture as ‘magical’ is now thought to beg questions about its coherence and rationality. By writing early modern cultural history in the same terms, we run the additional risk of taking sides in the very disputes that turned ‘magic’ from a secondary theological misdemeanour into everything that was regarded as vacuous and irrational. In witch-prosecuting Europe, the designation ‘magical’ became for the first time a major weapon of intellectual and cultural warfare.

In the history of early modern religion it is still difficult to use the term uncontentiously.[2] But more sympathetic attention to the natural philosophy of the period has revealed a vigorous tradition of positive evaluations of magic to offset the gradually more pejorative usage. Here, the essential semantic claim was that the contemporary term ‘magic’ was descended from the *magia* of the ancient Persians—that is to say, it signified not merely genuine science but universal wisdom itself, the very apogee of knowledge of the world. Pico della Mirandola described it as ‘the sum of natural wisdom, the practical part of natural science, based on exact and absolute understanding of all natural things’, and Cornelius Agrippa as ‘the greatest profoundnesse of natural Philosophic, and absolutcst perfection therof’? The restoration of magic ‘to its ancient and honorable meaning’ was likewise urged by Francis Bacon, on the grounds that for the Persians it ‘was taken for a sublime wisdom, and the knowledge of the universal consents of things’.[4] Much else distinguished Pico and Agrippa from Bacon; the defenders of magic could be as much at odds with themselves as with those who eventually denounced it altogether. But they shared a common belief that magic properly so called—that is, *tttagia*—was not only consistent with natural philosophy but one of its most elevated and rewarding forms. Many Renaissance intellectuals were evidently keen to promote preternature as an area of potentially great scientific interest, and one way to do this was to revalue the traditional vocabulary of magic. As one Englishman wrote: ‘[A] Magus, is properly, a great Naturalist, or a Person well skil’d in the Courses and Operations of Nature.’[5] The, by then, wholly orthodox and commonplace definition given at Wittenberg in 1667 was the same: ‘Magic is a practise consisting in the knowledge of hidden things and the art of working wonders.’[6]

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[1] S. J. Tambiah, Afa/ir, *Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge, 1990), 11-24.

[2] The issues are best seen in the exchange between Hildred Gecrtz and Keith Thomas on ‘An Anthropology of Religion and Magic’, J. *Interdisciplinary Hist,* 6 (1975), 71-89,91-109; see also Ch. 31 below.

It has thus become possible for one historian of early modern natural philosophy to say that magic entered ‘the normal vocabulary of the sciences, so bringing about connotations of the transcendental potentialities of science in both its pure and applied forms’.[7] In these circumstances, its later connotations are quite out of place, along with the many modern attempts, from Frazer and Malinowski to D. L. O’Keefe, to define just what magic essentially *is.* Magic is not, essentially, anything; it is what, in particular cultural settings, it is construed to be.[8] To say that its identification rests on ‘the (scientific) category of the possible’ is, thus, to concede the point.[9] Not only have concepts of scientific possibility changed dramatically across time; in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they even allowed for the possibility of magic. From both the semantic and the historical points of view, therefore, we

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’ Pico, cited in Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton,* 58; Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa [von Ncttesheim], *Of the vanitie and uncertaintie ofartes and sciences,* trans. James Sanford, ed. Catherine M. Dunn (Northridge, Calif., 1974), 124.

[4] Bacon, *De augmentisscientiarum,* in *Works,* iv. 366.

[5] [Thomas Ady], *Doctrine of devils,* 160; cf. Van Hclmont, cited by Allen G. Debus, ‘The Chemical Debates of the Seventeenth Century: The Reaction to Robert Fludd and Jean Baptiste van Helmont', in M. L. Righini Bonelli and William R. Shea (eds.), *Reason, Experiment, and Mysticism in the Scientific Revolution,* (New York, 1975), 38; Fludd cited by Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London, 1972), 74-5. Other similar early modem definitions of *magia* are conveniently collected in Norbert Henrichs, ‘Scientia Magica', in Alwin Diemer (ed.), *Der Wissenschaftsbegriff: Historische und Systemalische Untersuchungen* (Meisenheim am Glau, 1970), 30-46.

[6] Laurentius Buggcs, *praeses* (Samuel Porath, *respondent), Disputatiophysica qua magiam doemoniacem ceu illicitam, et naturalem ceu licitam* (Wittenberg, 1667), sig. A2’.

’ Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton,* 58.

• A point made forcefully by Patrick Curry, ‘Revisions of Science and Magic’, *Hist. Science,* 23 (1985), 299-325, esp. 320 (‘magic “is” as it is employed and deployed’), and by Tambiah, *Magic, Science. Religion,* 1-31, who speaks of the danger of reifying magic as a ‘well-defined bounded’ system, ‘whose contours and motivations and propensities can be delineated ahistorically and universally in a context-free fashion’ (29-30).

’ Tzvetan Todorov, *Les Genres du discours* (Paris, 1978), 250.

need to be able to speak disinterestedly of a magical element in early modern science—by way of cultural report, that is, and not as a form of description. But to do this the mental habits acquired during two hundred years of reformulation will have to be laid aside.

One focus of interest in *magia* was the investigation of what contemporaries called ‘natural magic’ {*magia naturalist* a subject which is now recognized to have had very considerable intellectual appeal across broad sections of the scholarly community. Its vogue was due, in part, to its philosophical foundations in Neoplatonism and the ‘Hermetic tradition’.[10] In the reformed *magia* pioneered by Ficino and summarized in Agrippa’s influential *De occulta philosophia,* causation was seen in terms of an organically related hierarchy of powers. Influences descended from the angelic or intellectual world of spirits (‘those immaterial substances, which dispense, and minister all things’[11]), to the stellar and planetary world of the heavens, which in turn governed the behaviour of earthly things and their physical changes. The ‘magician’ was, in consequence, someone who sought to ascend to a knowledge of these superior powers and then accentuate their normal workings by drawing them down artificially to produce wonderful effects. At the highest level, *magia* became as much an act of mystical illumination as a piece of science; here, the magician aimed at a priest-like role and his wonders competed with the miracles of religion. Agrippa thought that the mysteries of the angelic intelligences above the stars could only be grasped by rites—by what he called ‘Ceremonial Magic’. But he still regarded this as essential to any genuine attempt at *magia.* Indeed, the claim that *magia* was the highest form of wisdom depended precisely on its ability to embrace all aspects of the world order, elementary, celestial, and super-celestial, and all forms of access to its truths, including the mystical and the religious.

It would not, then, have seemed feasible to any Neoplatonist to make a ‘fideistic’ separation in these matters.[12] Nevertheless, communing with angels was recognized to be somewhat different (apart from being vastly more dangerous) from dealing with the properties of terrestrial things or the effluvia of the planets and stars, and it was therefore with these lower levels of enquiry that *magia naturalis* was usually associated. In many classic formulations its task was said to be the uniting—the

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[10] The terms are, of course, Frances Yates’s, and for what follows I am indebted, in particular, to her *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London, 1964), esp. 1-189, as well as to Charles G. Nauert, Jr., *Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought* (London, 1965), 222-91. For continuing doubts about the label ‘Hermetic*, see Brian Copenhaver, ‘Hermes Trismegistus, Proclus, and the Question of a Philosophy of Magic in the Renaissance’, in Ingrid Merkel and Allen G. Debus (cds.), *Hermeticism and the Renaissance: Intellectual History and the Occult in Early Modern History* (London, 1988), 79-110, esp. 93. For the history of positive evaluations of natural magic in the century between Ficino and Della Porta, see Paola Zambelli, ‘Le Problcme de la magic naturcllc à la Renaissance’, in Lech Szezucki (cd.), *Magia, Astrologia e Religione nel Rinascimento* (Warsaw, 1974), 48-82. Cf. ead., ‘Scholastic and Humanist Views of Hermeticism and Witchcraft’, in Merkel and Debus (eds.), *Hermeticism and the Renaissance*, 129-32, where she says (131) that ‘the existence of two forums of magic became a topos’.

[11] Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa [von Nctlesheim], *Three books of occult philosophy*, trans. J[ohn] F[rench] (London, 1651), 5.

[12] I borrow the term from W. H. Greenleaf’s discussion of Francis Bacon’s separation of matters of faith from matters of reason; see *Order, Empiricism and Politics: Two Traditions of English Political Thought 1500-1700 (London,* 1964), 208.

'marrying'—of heaven and earth. The true natural magician, wrote Della Porta, ascribed all inferior effects 'to the stars as their causes; whereas if a man be ignorant hereof, he loseth the greatest part of the knowledge of secret operations and works of nature'. Quoting Plotinus, he reported that *tnagia* had only originated at all 'that the superiors might be seen in these inferiors, and these inferiors in their superiors—earthly things in heavenly ... likewise heavenly things in earthly.'[13]

Even this will seem odd to the modern reader, whose sense of what is meant by the category 'natural' is likely to be affronted by the inclusion of astrology, talismans, sympathetic action, and the like. But here it is our expectations that are at fault; that is, we expect something called 'natural magic' to be divisible into its 'natural' and its 'magical' components.[14] For the Neoplatonists, the relationship between objects in the material world and the celestial powers that ruled their behaviour *was* a natural relationship, and the events that resulted from it were caused by *virtutes nattirales.* This was not compromised even by Ficino's adoption of the *spiritus mundi* as the link between the two. The *spiritus* was itself substantial, like the rarest air, or the purest heat; and *spiritus* magic was an attempt to control its physical influx into material things.[15] Besides astrology, the key ingredient of'Celestial Magic' (Agrippa's label for second-level *tnagia)* was mathematics; 'For whatsoever things are, and are done in these inferior naturall vertues, are all done, and governed by number, weight, measure, harmony, motion, and light.' In conjunction with the investigation of the elementary world, Agrippa expected it to yield 'middle' sciences with eminently natural credentials and with considerable experimental potential—arithmetic, music, geometry, optics, astronomy, and mechanics.[16] It is true that, technically, he reserved the label 'Natural Magic' for the lowest of the three forms of *tnagia,* the study of'those things which are in the world', identifying it with medicine and natural philosophy (in effect, with physics). But this too should not mislead us. For although this first-level *tnagia* was to begin with the 'four Elements, their qualities, and mutuall mixtions', its main subject-matter was occult virtues. And these again stemmed from the natural powers of the heavens.[17]

They were 'occult' simply because their causes were hidden beyond the reach of human intellect, and because their remarkable effects were merely manifested to experience, not rationally explained. In the third part of his *De vita libri tres* Ficino spoke, for example, of talismanic stones whose power depended not just on 'the qualities recognized by the senses, but also and much more on certain properties... hidden to our senses and scarcely at all recognized by reason'.[18] There were, agreed

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[n] Della Porta, *Natural magick*, 13-14.

[14] MacDonald Ross, 'Occultism and Philosophy', 111 n. 26.

[11] Yates, *Giordano Bruno,* 69. D. P. Walker's term 'spiritual magic* *(Spiritualand Demonic Magic, pH' sim,* esp. 75-84) is, thus, slightly misleading; pneumatic magic might be a better description.

[14] Agrippa, *Occult philosophy,* 167. On these 'middle', or applied mathematical, sciences in early modern natural philosophy, see Heilbron, *Early Modern Physics,* 2,9-10,21.

[17] Agrippa, *Occult philosophy,* 3,6.

[11] Gtcd by Brian P. Copenhaver, 'Scholastic Philosophy and Renaissance Magic in the *De vita* of Marsilio Ficino', *Renaissance Quart.* 37 (1984), 525.

Agrippa, ‘besides the Elementary qualities which we know, other certain imbred [r/r] vertues created by nature, which we admire, and are amazed at, being such as we know not, and indeed seldom or never have seen.’ Examples were the behaviour of the ccheneis, the salamander, and the satyrs of the ancient world. Agrippa also noted those inclinations in things which produced ‘friendship’ *(sympathid)* or ‘enmity’ *(antipathia)* between them—‘desiring such, and such a thing if it be absent, and to move towards it, unless it be hindred, and to acquiess in it when it is obtained, shunning the contrary, and dreading the approach of it, and not resting in, or being contented with it.’ In the sort of passage that the historian of the epistemology of witchcraft beliefs needs to bear in mind, he remarked that there were ‘many such kind of wonderfull things, scarce credible, which notwithstanding are known by experience’.[19]

What brought the terrestrial and the celestial together in one *magia ttalttralis* was the need to trace these occult events to the dispensations of higher worlds. Like Ficino, Agrippa derived them from the *spiritus mundi* and the rays of the heavenly bodies. Indeed, it was usual in all Neoplatonic acounts of natural magic to say that occult qualities were caused by planets.[20] The idea of‘signatures’ also depended on the ability both of the heavens to stamp particular characteristics and uses onto natural things from above and of the natural magician to read them. Talismans could only be thought to work if pneumatic links were assumed between *spiritus* and *materia* and if the characters and figures placed on them were capable of natural activity. Even incantations and songs could draw down stellar influences through the channel of the *spiritus.*[21] Thus, despite Agrippa’s technical restriction of natural magic to the elementary world, his depiction of it presupposed an awareness ofcelestial forces and a willingness to exploit them. These, however, were still natural forces; they fell short of those truly spiritual (that is to say, angelic) powers that could only be tapped by a kind of religious discipline.

Despite some extravagant versions of this search for gnostic enlightenment at the highest, most esoteric level—the direction taken (it has been suggested[22]) by Guillaume Postel, Giordano Bruno, and John Dee, as well as by the Corpus Hermeticum itself—Neoplatonic *magia* developed more soberly and with more practical aims largely because *spiritus* and *materia* could be ‘married’ in a natural philosophy concentrating on physics, medicine, mathematics, and astrology, and, thus, on the quantitative categories of number, weight, and measure. In this respect, the modest ambitions of Ficino were, in fact, much more typical than the aspirations of Pico and Agrippa, both of whom thought that this concentration was a weakness, not an asset. The danger of rising higher to cabbala (Pico) or theurgy (Agrippa) was, of course, that rivalry with orthodox religion became blatant. Powerful denunciations derived from Augustine and Aquinas could be levelled at ‘Ceremonial Magic’, and

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” Agrippa, *Occult philosophy,* 24,38,25; Naucrt, *Agrippa,* 266-8.

[20] Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic,* 79; cf. Agrippa, *Occult philosophy,* 30-1.

[21] Yates, *Giordano Bruno,* 78.

[22] *Webster, Paracelsus to Newton, 59.*

the possibility that the higher spirits communed with were in fact devils brought *magia* at this level a particularly bad reputation. Devotees insisted that they addressed only angels, or, more ambiguously, the good daemons of Neoplatonic cosmology. But, in general, magicians claimed to practise mostly *magia naturalis* or avoided the super-celestial altogether. They focused accordingly on the understanding of material forms and on the production of this-worldly effects. They hoped to base a brilliant technology on the manipulation of secret processes, but they aimed at *mira* not *miracula.* Some forty years ago, D. P. Walker wrote that *magia* 'was always on the point of turning into art, science, practical psychology, or, above all, religion', a precariousness that eventually led to its disappearance.[23] Today, it is not so much the overlap as the identity with science that excites most interest; but in this context the 'translatability' (semantic as well as epistemological) of *magia* remains highly relevant.

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It was precisely the fact that Neoplatonic *magia naturalis* was on the whole cautious and restrained—and, above all, insistently naturalistic—that helped to gain for natural magic such widespread attention in early modern scientific thought.[24] Those who stressed its operative and mimetic, rather than its illuminative aspects were likely to adopt observational and experimental modes of enquiry, often as meticulously as anyone else.[25] It was because the *vis rerum* and the workings of sympathies and antipathies were regarded as things hidden that most argued for an aggressively empirical and interventionist attitude to nature. Nor were natural magicians necessarily averse to collaborative and institutionalized investigation, as illustrated by the many societies and 'academies' created to promote the study of natural 'secrets'. This means that we can set aside some of the rather extravagant and now challenged claims for the impact of 'Hermeticism' and still acknowledge the role of natural magicians in stimulating a reassessment of early modern scientific aims and methods.[26]

Natural magic was, for example, a dominant influence on Paracelsus, for whom it 'represented a fund of sound observations of a kind prerequisite for work in the experimental sciences developed in the course of the ensuing century'.[27] It naturally appealed to his immediate medical followers, but also continued to interest the moderate Paracelsians of the seventeenth century, like Daniel Sennert and Joan Baptista van Helmont.[28] It was the one organizing principle in the otherwise polymathic thinking of Girolamo Cardano, by no means a Neoplatonist, who studied medicine at Pavia and Padua and practised at Milan, Pavia, and Bologna, and whose *Desubtilitate* and *De rerum varietate* were hugely successful and widely cited expositions of preternatural topics.[29] It was central to the work of Giambattista Della Porta,[30] and to many others who championed the benefits of technology and mechanics.[31] Several of the scientific and technological projectors of Civil War and Interregnum England, including Samuel Hartlib, were inspired by a reformed version of natural magic.[32] And it has been said that among the members of the Royal Society itself, John Aubrej, Elias Ashmolc, and Robert Plot 'preserved to a remarkable degree the outlook of the natural magicians of the renaissance'.[33]

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[23] Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic.* 75-6.

[24] For accounts of its wider reception and influence, see Marie Boas, *The Scientific Renaissance, 1450-1630* (London, 1962), 183-90; Debus, *Man and Nature,* 6,12-15; Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton,* 60-71 (on whose distinction between the 'exoteric' and the 'esoteric' versions of natural magic I rely). There is also much relevant information in P. M. Rattansi, 'The Social Interpretation of Science in the Seventeenth Century', in Peter Mathias (ed.), *Science and Society, 1600-1900* (Cambridge 1972) 1-32.

[25] Boas, *Scientific Renaissance,* 185; Brian Easlea, *Witch Hunting, Magic and the New Philosophy* (Brighton, 1980), 90.

[26] Typical of the criticisms of Yates are those of Paolo Rossi, 'Hermeticism, Rationality and the Scientific Revolution', in Righini Bonelli and Shea (eds.), *Reason, Experiment, and Mysticism* 256-68' the debate is summarized by Brian Vickers, 'Introduction', in id. (ed.), *Occult and Scientific Mentalities* 4-6. The preservation of magic from the historiographical criticisms made against 'Hermeticism' is proposed by Copenhaver, 'Hermes Trismegistus', in Merkel and Debus (eds.), *Hermeticism* 93.

[27] Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton.* 57-8; cf. Walter Pagel, *Paracelsus: An Introduction to Philosophical Medicine in the Era of the Renaissance* (Basel, 1958), 62-5.

Perhaps the most striking example of an exoteric natural magician is Francis Bacon, whose methodological advocacy of a reformed 'Persian' *magia* was such a feature of his *De augmentis scientiarum.*[3'] Bacon was certainly scornful of some of the most typical features of natural magic and singled out Paracelsus, Agrippa, and Cardano for attack. But this stemmed more from exasperation at the corruption of a potentially valuable form of enquiry than from out-and-out rejection.[35] The ends of natural magic were 'noble'; its aim was 'to call and reduce natural philosophy from variety of speculations to the magnitude of works'. Unfortunately, explanations in terms of sympathies and antipathies were often glib and the instances 'credulous and superstitious', while resorting continually to occult properties dulled the understanding and led easily to fictions.[36] Bacon disliked what he saw as the esoterism and illuminism of

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[24] It was in connection with Van Helmont that Pagel remarked that: 'It was the trend promoting natural magic ... which in the era of the renaissance further developed scientific thinking and discovery'; Pagel, *Joan Baptista van Helmont,* 26.

[w] Markus Fierz, *Girolamo Cardano 1501-1576: Physician, Natural Philosopher, Mathematician, Astrologer, and Interpreter of Dreams,* trans. Helga Niman (Boston, 1983); summaries of Cardano's two texts in Thorndike, *History of Magic,* v. 563-79.

[10] Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic,* 76, writes of an exact equivalence of *magia naturalis* and *philosophia naturalis* in Della Porta. Cf. William Eamon, 'Arcana Disclosed: The Advent of Printing, the Book of Secrets Tradition and the Development of Experimental Science in the Sixteenth Century', *Hist. Science, 22* (1984), 134-6.

[31] On the extent to which the 'technological dream' of the early modem period was inspired by natural magic, see William Eamon, 'Technology as Magic in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance', *Janus,* 70 (1983), 171-212.

[32] Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform, 1626-1660* (London, 1975), 324-35 and *passim.*

[33] *Webster, Paracelsus to Newton, (A.*

[34] Indispensable both for Bacon's indebtedness to Renaissance natural magic and his wish to dissociate himself from some of its features is Paolo Rossi, *Francis Bacon: From Magic to Science,* trans. Sacha Rabinovitch (London, 1968), 11-35. Thorndike's very hostile chapter on Bacon *(History of Magic,* vii. 63-88) is nevertheless alert to natural magical themes in the *Instauratio magna. See* also Daniel Becquemont, 'Lc Rcjet de la causalité magique dans l'acuvrc de Bacon', in Margaret Jones-Davies (cd.), *La Magie et ses langages* (Lille, 1980), 71-82.

[35] On the semi-Paracelsian elements in Bacon's speculative philosophy, see the items by Rees in n. 40 below.

[36] Francis Bacon, *The advancement of learning,* in *Works,* iii. 289. His most extended discussion of natural magic is in *De augmentis scientiarum,* in *Works,* iv. 365-9, but the most revealing is in his introduction

the magus, the promise of quick and easy solutions, and the pursuit of novelty for its own sake. Above all, he rejected the idea that natural philosophy consisted of arcane mysteries which it was the privileged individual's private mission to reveal. Yet these were misgivings concerning the ethics and investigative style of natural magic, not its aims and possibilities. His own definition of what the subject should be was, in fact, absolutely conventional, even echoing Agrippa's, and Bacon was evidently aware of this: 'I however understand it as the science which applies the knowledge of hidden forms *(Formae Abditae)* to the production of wonderful operations; and by uniting (as they say) actives with passives, displays the wonderful works of nature *(magnolia naturae).'*[31] Of this applied science he had the very highest expectations regarding dominion over nature by a kind of interpretive servitude to nature. In the Baconian pyramid of knowledge it was the operative equivalent of'Metaphysic', and, short of the discovery of nature's summary law itself, it occupied the 'most excellent' tier of natural philosophy. No 'radical or fundamental alterations and innovations of nature' could be expected without a partnership of 'Metaphysic' with 'Natural Magic'.[38] This admittedly high strategy for science was matched by the depiction of ideal enquiry in Bacon's *Neiv Atlantis.*[3'l] But it was also underlined by natural magical elements in his detailed views on natural processes. In modern scholarship Bacon's nature emerges as purposive and discriminating, alive with perceptions, functioning by *spiritus,* and susceptible to the force of the imagination.[40] Like Ficino and many alchemists, he thought of spirit as something physical, even if subtle and invisible.[41] If he disliked magicians 'who explain everything by Sympathies and Antipathies', he could also write that 'when one body is applied to another, there is a kind of election to embrace that which is agreeable, and to exclude or expel that which is ingrate: and whether the body be alterant or altered, evermore a perception precedeth operation.'[42]

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to the proposed (but never completed) *Historia sympathiaeet antipathiae rerum,* in *Works,* v. 203-4 (all refs, here and subsequently to Eng. trans.).

[17] Bacon, *De augmentis scientiarum,* in *Works,* iv. 366-7. [M] Ibid. iv. 366.

” TheA'rwzlr/ann'iisatthcccntrcofFranccsYates'sattempttorecruitBacontothe'Hermetic'tradition; sec Prances A. Yates,'The Hermetic Tradition in Renaissance Science', in Charles S. Singleton (cd.), *Art, Science, an J History in the Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1967), 255-74, and ead., *Rosicrucian Enlightenment,* 155-67. Cf. Debus, *Man and Nature,* 116-17.

[40] Rossi, *Francis Bacon,* 11—12; Maxwell Primack, 'Outline of a Reinterpretation of Francis Bacon's Philosophy', *J. Hist. Philosophy, 5* (1967), 123-32; S. J. Linden, 'Francis Bacon and Alchemy The Reformation of Vulcan', *J. Hist. Ideas,* 35 (1974), 547-60; Graham Rees, 'Francis Bacon's Semi-Paracelsian Cosmology', and id, 'Francis Bacon's Semi-Paracelsian Cosmology and the *Great Instauration' Ambix,* **22 (1975), 81–101, 161–73.**

[41] J. C. Gregory, 'Chemistry and Alchemy in the Natural Philosophy of Sir Francis Bacon. 1561-1626', *Ambix,* 2 (1938), 93-111; Lynn Thorndike, 'The Attitude of Francis Bacon Tnd Desart« towards Magic and Occult Sciences', in E. Ashworth Underwood (ed.), *Science, Medicine and History: Essays on the Evolution of Scientific Thought and Medical Practice Written in Honour of Charles Singer (1* vols.; London, 1953), i. 451-4; id. *History of Magic,* vii. 77-9; D. P. Walker, 'Francis Bacon and *Spiritus',* in Allen G. Debus (cd.), *Science, Medicine and Society in the Renaissance: Essays to Honour Walter Pagel (2* vols.; London, 1972), ii. 121-30; Graham Rees, 'Francis Bacon's Biological Ideas: A New Manuscript Source', in Vickers (cd.), *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance,* 297-314.

[42] Francis Bacon, *Sylva sylvarum: or a natural history in ten centuries,* in *Works,* ii. 602- cf. id. *Novum organum,* in *Works,* iv. 84; id, *Parasceve ad historiam naturalem et experimentalem,* in *Works,* iv 255

Bacon traced these 'perceptions' not in the usual natural magical fashion to the substantial forms of natural bodies and the influence on them of the *spiritus mundi* and the stars, but to their latent configurations', or internal constructions. Sympathy resulted when the latent configurations of different bodies conformed; antipathy when they did not. He even planned an entire study of the subject as one of the model natural histories of the third stage of the *Iiistauratio magna.* In an introduction to it he again acknowledged its intellectual (and rhetorical) pedigree:

> Strife and friendship in nature arc the spurs of motions and the keys of works. Hence are derived the union and repulsion of bodies, the mixture and separation of parts, the deep and intimate impressions of virtues, and that which is termed the junction of actives and passives; in a word the *magnalia naturae.* But this part of philosophy concerning the sympathy and antipathy of things, which is also called Natural Magic, is very corrupt.[43]

Several of Bacon's projected *magnalia naturae* recalled the typical studies of the Renaissance magus, and his natural history of life and death was particularly dependent on magical and alchemical notions. His last major work, published posthumously as *Sylva sylvarum,* was so heavily indebted to authors like Cardano and Della Porta for its individual 'experiments', and contains so many references to 'secret processes', 'the secret virtue of sympathy and antipathy', 'immaterial virtues', and 'secret and hidden virtues and properties' that it often seems to be merely a continuation of the natural magical tradition.[44] Anxiety to preserve Bacon as a forerunner of modern science has, in the past, led some to apologize for this text as a hurried and untypical composition. Instead, we should recall the importance he himself gave after 1620 to stage three of the *Instauratio magna,* for which *Sylva sylvarum* was to provide the primary natural historical evidence. In 1622, for example, he wrote that the new logic *(novum organum),* 'even if it were completed, would not without the Natural History much advance the Instauration of the Sciences, whereas the Natural History without the Organum would advance it not a little'.[45] For Bacon, *Sylva sylvarum* was more than natural history; it was, in fact, 'a high kind of natural magic', even if some of the materials were (he admitted) unsatisfactory. It went through more editions in the seventeenth century than any other part of his natural philosophy.[46]

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[43] Francis Bacon, *Aditus ad historian sympathiae et antipathiae rerum,* in JKorZ'j, v. 203. On what Bacon meant by sympathy and antipathy, see Rees, 'Francis Bacon's Scmi-Paracelsian Cosmology', 97-8.

[44] Francis Bacon, *Sylva sylvarum,* in *Works,* ii. 379-82,433-4,493-8,640-1,652-60,660—71,671—2. Bacon's sources arc traced by his editor R. L. Ellis, loc. cit., 325-9. Rossi says *of Sylva sylvarum* that 'the influence of magic, and alchemical traditions on Bacon is nowhere more obvious': *Francis Bacon,* 12; cf. MacDonald Ross, 'Occultism and Philosophy', 106-7, who, in arguing that empiricists could offer no a priori criterion for choosing between credible reports of occult phenomena, says: 'It is therefore hardly surprising that there should be as much superstition in theSy/va *sylvarum* of Francis Bacon... as there is in the *Magia naturalis* of the occultist della Porta, and rather more evidence of practical experimentation in the latter.'

[45] Francis Bacon, *Historia naturalis et experimentalis,* in *Works,* v. 133-4; cf. Rossi, *Francis Bacon,* 11, 214-19.

[44] Francis Bacon, *Sylva sylvarum,* in *Works,* ii. 378. Bacon admitted that some of its 'experiments' were 'vulgar and trivial, mean and sordid, curious and fruitless', but for a revaluation of its crucial place in his natural philosophy and its subsequent popularity and influence, see Graham Rees, 'An Unpublished

Since natural magic was a perfectly viable expression of scientific interests in this period, there should be no need to seek an explanation for Bacon's adoption of many of its concepts and programmes other than his intellectual taste for it.

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The case of Bacon shows the recycling of what had become a particularly popular scientific vocabulary in the cause of fundamental reform. For this popularity, Neoplatonism and 'Hermeticism' were certainly, in part, responsible. But they were not the only influences at work. One of the remarkable things about early modern natural philosophy is the frequency with which natural magic was discussed and evaluated by those whose epistemology was still Christian Aristotelian and Thomist. This is an important point here, since what we are looking for in natural magic is a point of reference for demonology—for notions of demonic magic; and the philosophy of most who theorized about witchcraft and thought of it as real was resolutely traditional.[47] Some, indeed, were exponents of Aristotelian natural philosophy in their own right; for example, the Dominican inquisitor Silvestro Mazzolini Da Prierio, the Spanish Jesuit and professor at the Collegio Romano, Benito Pereyra (Pererius), and his fellow countryman and fellow Jesuit, Juan Maldonado.[48] Scribonius, who wrote a natural philosophical digest that corrected Aristotle by (among other things) bringing demons into physics, denied that the earth moved, but found no difficulty in allowing for occult qualities, including sympathies and antipathies. Natural magic was, evidently, less threatening to a traditionalist than heliocentrism.[49] Erastus actually wrote a treatise on occult virtues, giving an Aristotelian instead of an astrological derivation of them, an argument pointing (according to D. P. Walker) 'directly towards Baconian empiricism'.[50]

The recognition accorded to natural magic among many mainstream Aristotelians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was, in part, only a continuation of the mental habits of their later medieval predecessors. As Bert Hansen has shown, the study of nature's normal processes and the study of preternatural and artificial marvels complemented each other in scholasticism, even if the first was considered to be science proper and the second a form of technology. This complementarity was pos-

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[47] For the implications for demonology of traditional university learning, including the devotion of university academics and graduates to the principle of *auctoritas.* see Ridder-Symoens. 'Intellectual and Political Backgrounds', 40-56.

[41] For Da Prierio, see above, Ch. 2, and C. H. Lohr, 'Renaissance Latin Aristotelian Commentaries', *Renaissance Quart.* 33 (1980), 671-2. Cf. Benedictus Pererius, *De communibus omnium rerum naturalium pnncipiis el ajfectiombus* (Paris, 1579), first pub. Rome 1562. Thorndike, *History of Magic* vi 409 presumes that this 'was used as a text in Jesuit schools in teaching the *Physics* and natural philosophy of Aristotle'. Pererius was also author of *Adversus fallaces et superstitiosas artes, id est. de magia.* See also C. H. Lohr, 'Renaissance Latin Aristotle Commentaries', *Renaissance Quart.* 32 (1979), 564-73. On Maldonado, see id., 'Renaissance Latin Aristotle Commentaries', *Renaissance Quart.* 31 (1978), 562-3

[49] Wilhelm Adolf Scribonius, *Rerum naturalium doctrina methodica.* 3rd edn. (Basel 15831 1-3 12-13,51-2; commentary in Thorndike, *History of Magic.v\.* 351-5.

[M] Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic.* 156-8 (quotation at 158).

sible largely because occult qualities of exactly the sort described by Ficino and Agrippa were also allowed for in the metaphysics of scholasticism and because magic could claim to discover and apply them. The chief agents of change in sublunary things were, of course, the four principal qualities and their secondary compounds. But whereas these were directly accessible via sensation, there were other qualities that could never be apprehended by the senses, even though the effects of their operations were manifest to all. The behaviour of solid bodies in free fall was obvious enough; so was the reaction of iron to the loadstone. Comparable examples from the field of medicine were the spread of contagions and the relief of bodily ailments by purgatives which, again, seemed to go beyond the workings of the ordinary qualities involved and the routine therapies associated with the doctrine of the temperament. Since none of these local motions could be deduced from the perceptible qualities of the objects in question, they had to be treated contingently as the effects of hidden virtues, whose power of acting might be experienced and described but never (for sensation-dependent Aristotelians) known.

A magic that tried to make the insensible intelligible could not (yet) be classed as a true form of knowledge. But Hansen writes that its causality, at least, 'as its notions of being ... flowed in the streambed of Aristotelian thought'. In particular, the doctrine of the appetitive aspects of natural action, known as 'sympathies' and 'antipathies', flourished in a natural philosophical tradition that gave great prominence to final causes and the category of purpose. It did not, in other words, have to rely on Renaissance Hermcticism for its credentials, and should not be thought of as a uniquely 'Hermetic' idea. 'Medieval magic's view of the world', Hansen concludes, 'was fully that of scholastic natural philosophy.' And if magic did eventually contribute to the dramatic scientific changes of the next age, it did so, in part, with a scholastic weighting.[51] Such findings, it is worth noting, apply well to Ficino himself, whose views on occult qualities accorded with those in traditional, orthodox physics, metaphysics, and medicine—from Galen to Aquinas (in his *De occultis operibus naturae),* and into later medieval scholasticism. The distinction that sustained the resort to such qualities—between 'accidental' and 'substantial' forms—was, in any case, 'fundamental in scholastic philosophy'.[52]

Thanks largely to the work of Charles Schmitt, we can now recognize that the Aristotelianism of the later period was far from being static or inflexible with regard to its medieval inheritance. The many Peripatetic philosophers who came to discuss natural magic may, therefore, have been influenced as well by its prominence in 'Hermetic' circles. In fact, Schmitt himself speaks of an 'invasion of hermetic material into Aristotelian contexts', citing the works of Agostino Nifo and John Case as examples.[53] Among early modern proponents of what (following Hansen) we can call 'scholastic magic' there was, nevertheless, little of the extravagant enthusiasm for the scientist as magus and a great deal more sober caution about the dangers of natural magic and its possibly demonic implications. But with these reservations, the pursuit of nature's innermost secrets, the manipulative application of actives to passives, and the production of *mira* could be safely acknowledged as important aspects of orthodox natural philosophy. It was a Jesuit professor of philosophy and theology at Ingolstadt (he was also the rector of Dillingcn), who in 1581 proposed that by natural magic 'we apply true and natural causes to the production of rare and strange effects'. There was a real danger, he admitted, that superstition (and hence demonic intervention) could result from the application of causes that either had no physical efficacy at all, or not the efficacy that was aimed at. But this did not disqualify natural magic; it tied it even closer to its parent discipline: 'since the application has its basis in the principles of natural philosophy, it follows that natural magic is subordinated to natural philosophy. Which means that, concerning the application of causes, it is for natural philosophers to decide how far the nature of the causes agrees or disagrees [with the intended effects].'[54]

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[51] Bert Hansen, 'Science and Magic', in David C. Lindberg (cd.), *Science in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1978), 483-506 (quotations, 490, 495); cf. id., 'The Complementarity of Science and Magic before the Scientific Revolution', *American Scientist,* 74 (1986), 128—36; Dijksterhuis, AferAamzaftw, 156-60; Richard Kieckhefcr,/Wtfg«rmr^Af/^/e/4g« (Cambridge, 1990), 1,9-14,130-1,140,200-1.

[52] Copenhaver, 'Scholastic Philosophy and Renaissance Magic', 523-550 (quotation at 542).

The specialist account of sympathies and antipathies most frequently cited in early modern Europe was by Girolamo Fracastoro, but he was a product of Padua (where he studied under Pomponazzi), a physician to the early members of the Council of Trent, and in astronomy and medicine a committed Aristotelian and Galenist.[55] Jean Fcrnel's widely noted study of the occult causes of diseases, *De abditis rerum causis,* was in many ways the work of a medical traditionalist;[56] so too was the Paris physician Jacques Grevin's *Deux Livres des venins,* where natural magical causation and occult diseases were nevertheless acknowledged.[57] Less illustrious medical philosophers, like Antonio Ludovico (Antao Luis) of Lisbon and Giovanni Francesco Olmo of Brescia, approached the problems posed by occult properties as commentators on Galen.[58] The *Quaestiones physicae* of Joannes Freigius and the *De*

[”] Schmitt, *Aristotle,* 97, 99-101, and *passim* for the diversity and adaptability of early modern Aristotclianism; cf. id., 'Towards a Reassessment of Renaissance Aristotclianism*, *Hist. Science,* 11 (1973), 159-93. For Case, id.JoAz; *Case and Aristotclianism in Renaissance England* (Kingston and Montreal, 1983), 194—201,202-5. On the 'continuous dialogue' between Neoplatonic and Aristotelian styles of philosophy, see Eckhard Kessler, 'The Transformation of Aristotclianism during the Renaissance', in John Henry and Sarah Hutton (eds.), *New Perspectives on Renaissance Thought* (London, 1990), 137-47, esp. 144.

[M] Matthias Mairhofcr, *proponent* (Michael Mayer and Philippus Baumgartnerus, *respondentes), De principiis discemendi philosophiam veram reconditioremque a magia infami ac superstitiosa disputatio p 'hilosophica* (Ingolstadt, 1581), sigs. A2', A3r.

[”] Girolamo Fracastoro, *De sympathia et antipathia rerum* (Venice, 1546); cf. Thorndike, *History of Magic,* v. 488-97, who says that everything in this book 'is set forth in terms of the Aristotelian philosophy'^).

[%] For a detailed account of Ferners pathology of occult diseases and their remedies, stressing his departures from Galenic orthodoxy in this area, see Linda Deer Richardson, 'The Generation of Disease: Occult Causes and Diseases of the Total Substance', in A. Wear, R. K. French and I. M. Lonie (eds.) *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1985), 175-94.

[57] Jacques Grevin, *Deux Livres des venins* (Antw'erp, 1567-8), 9-10,34.

[M] Antonius Lodovicus, *De occultis proprietatibus* (Lisbon, 1540); Olmo, *De occult is in re medica propri-*

perfection rerum of Nicolaus Contarcnus treated sympathy and antipathy while surveying the traditional topics of Greek natural philosophy.[59] Another staunch Aristotelian and Padua professor, Francesco Piccolomini of Sienna, explained that *magia physica* was not found in Aristotle's *Problems* only because it dealt with the practical aspects of natural philosophy and belonged, therefore, to individual technologies like agriculture and medicine/'0 His fellow countryman Tommaso Giannini, professor at Ferrara, thought that, for natural events that were experienced but whose causes were unknown, explanations in terms of occult qualities were a lot more plausible than solutions that appealed to manifest ones.[61] Natural magic was allowed for as a genuine enquiry leading to the production of real effects by such an impeccably strict exponent of Catholic intellectual orthodoxy as the Dominican theology professor at Salamanca, Franciscus a Vitoria. Another Jesuit, the polymath Athanasius Kircher, who was professor of mathematics and physics at the Collegio Romano, 'built his career around natural magic' and planned an encyclopaedic study of *magia universalis',bl* and yet another, Gaspar Schott, actually produced one in Wurzburg between 1657 and 1659. In Elizabethan Oxford, John Case absorbed natural magic from the tradition to which Della Porta belonged and 'fused' it with a Peripatetic one.[63]

Hostility to 'hermetic' theory did not, evidently, entail opposition to natural magic. Erastus might denounce the latter in attacking Paracelsus, but, noted Marcus Friedrich Wendelin, the great weight of philosophical and theological opinion was against him.[64] Nor did the consideration of things occult commit natural philosophers and academic physicians to what Frances Yates called 'the occult philosophy'. It did not do so, apparently, in the case of John Dee, whose considerable scientific debt to the medieval tradition of natural magic was independent of his more Neoplatonic interest in magic's religious uses:

> If a sense of supernatural power [writes Nicholas Clulee], a curiosity to test the secrets of the occult tradition, a willingness to consider the occult as intelligible, and a confidence in finding explanations for insensible agents were ways that Renaissance magic prepared the ground for seventeenth-century science, these were more a central feature of natural magic independent of Hermeticism, Neoplatonism, and Kabbalah than of the more religiously motivated ideas of magic.[65]

Historians do not, therefore, have to adopt some version of the so-called Yates thesis

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etatibus, 1-8. For Ludovicus's Aristotelian commentaries, see C. H. Lohr, 'Renaissance Latin Aristotle Commentaries', *Renaissance Quart.* 31 (1978), 545. Commentaries on both authors in Thorndike, *History of Magic,* v. 551; vi. 230-5; Richardson, 'Generation of Disease', 192.

" JoannesThomasI'rcigius,j(9u<J«nowM/>/o'nr<te(Bascl, 1579), 165—75; Nicolaus Contarenus,Z)r^er-*fectione rerum* (Venice, 1587), 137—40 (first pub. 1576).

" Francesco Piccolomini, *Librorum adscientiam de natura attinentium* (Venice, 1596), fo. 8^{M}.

" Thorndike, *History of Magic,* vi. 205; I have not been able to consult Giannini's *De substantia caeliet stellarum efficientia disputationes Aristotelicae* (Venice, 1618).

" Heilbron, *Early Modern Physics,* 162. [M] Schmitt, *John Case,* 194-6.

[64] Marcus Friedrich Wendelin, *Contemplationuni physicarum* (Cambridge, 1648), 23.

*' Nicholas H. Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion* (London, 1988), 240-1, see also 18,65,133-4 (quotation at 241).

in order to recognize natural magic's very considerable significance in early modern intellectual circles.

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The overwhelming reason for its relevance during much of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the attempt made *within* both Christian Aristotelianism and Galenic medicine to deal more satisfactorily with the epistemological difficulties created by occult qualities. This is a further indication of the flexibility, adaptability, and eclecticism that enabled traditionalists to respond positively to fresh emphases in early modern science—of which the problem of occult causes was certainly one.[66] Peripatetic philosophy still dominated academic physics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and its teachers, as well as those in medical faculties, found themselves confronted by an ever growing number of important, yet supposedly unintelligible, phenomena. Gravitation, magnetism (a paradigm case), and medical purgation were assumed to depend on occult qualities and, therefore, on occult causes; they were the subjects of experience (even in the sense of experiment), not of rational explanation. Franco Burgersdijck, described in a modern history of physics at Leiden as 'the most influential representative of scholastic Aristotelianism in the [Dutch] republic', and whose textbooks (according to Charles Schmitt) 'were widely used throughout Protestant Europe until the end of the seventeenth century', argued that spontaneous generation too had occult causes.[67] His colleague Albert Kyper, who likewise 'adhered to the broad outlines of scholastic physics' while speaking of improving and correcting Aristotle, addressed the motions of the planets and the causes of the tides in the same terms.[63] To these instances were added others as important as the effects of electricity and the workings of poisons and their antidotes, as well as more traditional or less weighty items like the fatal glance of the basilisk, the

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“ Here, too, 1 follow Schmitt, zfrim>r/e, esp. 7,10-33, 89-109, together with Nancy G. Siraisi, Jri*cenna in Renaissance Italy: The 'Canon'and Medical Teaching in Italian Universities after 1500* (Princeton, 1987), 12,279—89. Schmitt does not, however, single out the fresh attention paid to occult causation as an example of Aristotelian responsiveness to contemporary problems in natural philosophy. Indispensable for the subject of occult qualities and its continuing role in Aristotelian physics is Heilbron, *Early Modern Physics,* 1-89, esp. 11-22; I also rely heavily on Ron Millen, 'The Manifestation of Occult Qualities in the Scientific Revolution', in Margaret J. Osler and Paul Lawrence Farber (eds.), *Religion, Science, and World-view* (Cambridge, 1985), 185—216. On the continuation of the traditional physics curriculum in 17th-c. Europe, see L. W. B. Brocldiss, 'Aristotle, Descartes and the New Science: Natural Philosophy at the University of Paris, 1600-1740', *Annals of Science,* 38 (1981), 33-69. The general expansion, as well as fragmentation, of Anstotlc studies is dealt with by C. H. Lohr, 'Jesuit Aristotelianism and Sixteenth-Century Metaphysics', in [Edwin A. Quain], *Paradosis: Studies in Memory of Ed win A Quoin* (New York 1976), 203-20. On occult qualities and causes in Galenic medicine, see Nancy G. Siraisi *Medieval and Early Renaissance* Afedirine (London 1990), 145-6; Lester S. King, 'The Transformation of Galenism', in Allen G. Debus (ed.), Afrdirine in *Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1974) 20-4- Andrew Wear 'Explorations in Renaissance Writings on the Practice of Medicine', in Wear, French and Lonie (eds)' *Medical Renaissance,* 141-4.

[47] Franco Burgcrsdicius, *Collegium physicum* (Leiden, 1632), sigs. Aa2'-Aa4' (Disputation 24)* Edward G. Ruestow, *Physics at Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Leiden: Philosophy and the New Science in the University (The* Hague 1973), 14-33 (quotation, 15); Schmitt, *Aristotle.* 137

“ Albert Kyper, *Institutions physicae (2* vols.; Leiden, 1645-6), i. 451-5,593^7; Ruestow *Physics at ... Leiden,* 39-43 (quotation, 39).

curative virtue of the 'weapon salve', and the powers of two curious fish (with which one comes to feel more than a little familiar)—the torpedo that numbed those who touched it, and the remora, or echcneis, which brought sailing ships in full voyage to a standstill. It seems implausible that the Jesuit optics expert d'Aguilon should have found specific (i.e. occult) qualities not only in the magnet, nephritic stone, and rhubarb, but in 600 other simples.[69] But there was, in fact, no limit to the range of occult agents—Hansen has called it 'phenomenal'[70]—since Peripatetic philosophers, like the 'Hermetic' and Paracclsian sort, continued to acknowledge the existence of affective natural actions based on sympathy and antipathy. Each entity in nature could exhibit these special virtues and many of its interactions with other entities could therefore become the product of occult causes.[71] Of sympathies and antipathies, wrote a Bremen medical professor, 'all nature generally provides abundant examples'.[72]

Faced with this array of problematic instances, the latter-day scholastics (like the proponents of the 'new science') made what has been called 'a serious effort ... to bring occult qualities within the scope of natural philosophy'.[73] This might be done theoretically, by attempting causal explanations of insensible things, or experimentally, by more systematic attention (as in Bacon's case) to the natural history of occult effects. The overall aim was to break the connection between insensibility and unintelligibility—in effect, to retain the occult as a category of investigation, but to make manifest its features. In this way, science and natural magic would no longer be merely complementary—the one concerned with true and demonstrated knowledge, the other with the instrumental, the artificial, and the contingent—but identical.

This 'manifestation' of the occult has been seen as a central component of the writings of prominent figures like Pomponazzi, Fracastoro, Cardano, Fernel, and Sennert.[74] But it had repercussions across the whole world of Aristotelian academic philosophy which are better illustrated in the works of more anonymous individuals. These reveal the sheer extent of normal interest in the science of the abnormal. For example, natural magical topics were accorded a place in a textbook tradition based on pedagogic needs. In Wendelin's *Contemplationum physicarum,* for instance, natural magic became simply one of the branches of physics—the others were medicine and alchemy. Philosophers generally recognized the wonderful virtues and properties in nature, said Wendelin (who for forty years was rector of the *Gymnasium* at Zerbst and

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[M] **Thorndike, *History of Magic,fn.* 47.**

[70] **Hansen,'Science and Magic', 493.**

[71] **For examples, see Caspar Bartholinus, *Enchiridion physicum* (Strasburg, 1625), 25-6; Raphael Aversa, *Philosophia metaphysicam physicamque* (2 vols.; Rome, 1625-7), i. 181-7,195-7; Johann Michael Schwimmer, *Ex physica secretion curiosilates* (Jena, 1672), *passim.* Heilbron, *Early Modem Physics,* 17, describes sympathies and antipathies as the 'most extravagant occult qualities'.**

[72] **Neufville, *Physiologia,* 377, and on occult qualities, 375-7.**

[71] **Millen, 'The Manifestation of Occult Qualities', 190. This was the spirit, it seems, in which Chassinus submitted his corrections of Aristotle to the Jesuit College at Lyons for inclusion in the syllabus; see Thorndike, *History of Magic,* vii. 380-3, and Godefridus Chassinus, *De natura sive de mundo* (Lyons, 1614), esp. 351-6.**

[74] **Millen,'The Manifestation of Occult Qualities', 191-7,202-8.**

also a renowned Calvinist theologian) and there was no doubt that those who understood them and applied them correctly could effect a kind of natural thaumaturgy.” In popular and authoritative commentaries on Aristotle, such as those issued by the Jesuits of the university of Coimbra between 1602 and 1607, natural magic was now recognized simply as applied physics.[76] Natural magical themes were also popular as subjects for the dissertations defended in disputation by examinands in Europe’s universities—exercises that, like their medieval predecessors the *quaestiones quodlibet,* reflected ‘the average interests and mental outlook of both teachers and students’.[77] At Oxford, for example, the *quaestiones* discussed for inception into the philosophy faculty mixed Aristotelian with occult scientific discussions.[78] Finally, natural magic and occult causation regularly occupied a rightful place in other standard surveys of natural and medical knowledge written by many individual academics whose intellectual credentials were highly respectable and orthodox, and whose aim was mainly to summarize and systematize, not to break new ground.[79] As the pace of natural philosophical change quickened elsewhere, theorizing on occult qualities reached its summation not with an academic but with a court physician, the Coimbra-trained Duarte Madeira Arrais, who ministered to the medical needs of King Joao IV of Portugal.[80]

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[75] Wcndelin, *Contemplationumphysicarum,* 21-7. For other examples, see Clemens Timplcr, *Physicae seu philosophiae naturalis systema methodicum* (Hanau, 1605), 81, 159-62; Johann Heinrich Alsted, *Encyclopaedia,* enlarged edn. (Herborn, 1630), 2266-70; [Jean d’Espagnet], *Enchiridion physicae restitutae,* 3rd edn. (Paris, 1642), 86-90 (first pub. 1624). For a survey of the literature, see Reif, ‘Textbook Tradition in Natural Philosophy, 17-32; Reif says of textbook writers that they frequently tried ‘to resolve their difficulties by resorting to such pseudo-explanations as “occult” qualities’ (p. 21).

[76] Hcilbron, *Early Modem Physics, 2* n. 6; [Collegium Conimbriccnsc], *Commentarii ...in octo libros physicorum* (Cologne and Frankfurt/Main, 1609), cols. 24(f)—25(a—b): ‘Est autem haec practica scientia: quia praxim rcspicil, tanquam fincm, ut ex diet is constat; unde non est proprie, ct intrinscce pars Physiologiac, quam spcculatricem scicntiam esse questione sequenti ostendemus: sed quidam quasi rivulus ex illius fontibus derivatus*; cf. 276(d). Schmitt, *Aristotle,* 138, says the Coimbra texts were ‘extraordinarily popular and frequently reprinted until the 1630s’. On textbook Aristotclianism in universities and seminaries, see Thorndike, *History of Magic,* vii. 372^125.

[77] Thorndike, *History of Magic,* vii. 338. On dissertations, see Ankarloo, *Trolldomsprocesserna i Sverige,* bibliography. Some typical examples are Constanlinus Zicgra, *praeses, De sympathia atque antipathia rerum naturalium, disputationem physicam* (Wittenberg, 1663); Bartholomaeus Schiitze, *praeses* (Heino Meyer, *respondens), Disputatio physica de magia* (Rostock, 1669), sigs. A3^r-B2’; Johann Sperling, *praeses* (I lenricus Solter, *respondens), Positionum decas de magia* (Wittenberg, 1648). On the magical phenomena discussed in the quodlibets, see Hansen, ‘Science and Magic’, 503 n. 27.

[71] Schmitt, *John Case,* 53-4. See also Mordechai Feingold, ‘The Occult Tradition in the English Universities of the Renaissance: A Reassessment’, in Vickers (ed.), *Occult and Scientific Mentalities,* 73-94; and for questions approved each year for disputation, Boase and Clark (eds.), *Register of the University of Oxford,* ii, pt. 1,170-9 (e.g., one of the questions in 1584 was: ‘Utrum ex naturali philosophia ratio redi possit sympathiae ct antipathiae vcl occultis in rebus qualitatibus?’, 171).

[79] See, for example, Otto Casmann, *Somatologia, physica generalis* (Frankfurt/Main, 1598), 592-624; Scribonius, *Rerum naturalium doctrina methodica,* 1-63; Rodolphus Goclenius the Younger, *Physicae genera lts* (Frankfurt/Main, 1613), 4—5,19-23, 113-23, 123-6,404—70; *id., Alirabilium naturae liber* (Frankfurt/Main, 1625), see esp. 232-5 on natural magic; Joannes Combachius, *Physicorum libriiv* (Marburg, 1620), 21-3, 289-92; Bartholinus, *Enchiridion physicum,* 25-6; Johann Sperling, *Institutiones physicae* (Lübeck, 1647 [colophon = 1646]), 324-45; Joannes Stierius, *Praecepta physicae tabulis inclusa,* 9th edn. (Jena, 1662), 19.

[10] Duarte Madeira Arrais, Mw *philosophiae et medicinae de qualitatibus occultis, a nemine unquam excultae, pars prima* (Lisbon, 1650), esp. 1-79.

The catholicity of the occult cause, and its resistance to demonstration, made it, to be sure, a *cause celebre* in the debates between traditional and 'new' natural philosophers, and led to many contemporary charges of indulgence and scientific laziness against its proponents. The historian of early modern physics, John Hcilbron, has spoken of continued Peripatetic evasion in this area.[81] The non-university 'Neo-Aristotelians among the Jesuits who wished to confront the challenge of the new philosophies of magnetism (particularly Gilbert's) found that persisting with occult qualities was a bar to progessive eclecticism, not an occasion for it.[82] On the other hand, Hcilbron himself acknowledges (speaking of the history of investigations into electrical phenomena) that for 'up to date general texts and reference works, which describe experiments and the instruments used to perform them, one must look to books on natural magic.'[83] Nor did the onset of the 'mechanical' philosophy (as we shall eventually see) mean the end of occult qualities—rather, their further adaptation to new needs. For the moment, what is important is the endorsement that was given in the adaptable and, thus, changing circles in which demonology thrived to the idea of natural magic as a science of the occult—that is to say, to a branch of natural philosophy which specialized in occult causation.

* * *

The literature represented here, together with the specialist treatments of Fracastoro, Fcrncl, and the other physicians, is of vast proportions and, in large part, still neglected. It is, therefore, easy to assert but difficult to illustrate the sheer extent of the general philosophical commitment to the causal scheme in which demonology participated. But a final individual text will serve to show the nature of everyday thinking on the subject. This is Bartholomaeus Keckcrmann's *Systema physicuni septern libris adornatuni* (1610), an outline of physics, defined as 'the science of observing the body of nature', which stays close to the Aristotelian pattern. Keckermann had been a student at Wittenberg and Leipzig and had taught at Heidelberg. The *Systema* was first given in 1607 as a lecture series at the university of Danzig where he was professor of philosophy, and is an example of what Schmitt has called the 'mass-audience' textbook.[84] Book I introduces the general problems relating to natural bodies and eventually reaches the subject of qualities. These are manifest or occult not in nature itself but in relation to our capacity to give causal explanations of them; as yet the cause of magnetism, for example, is unknown even to the most expert natural philosopher. In the mean time, we must be discreet about these areas of physics, attempting only probable arguments. Keckermann warns against those who, like

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[11] **Hcilbron, *Early Modem Physics,* 17.**

["] **Stephen Pumfrcy, 'Neo-Aristotelianism and the Magnetic Philosophy', in Henry and Hutton (eds.), *New Perspectives,* 177-89.**

[IJ] ***llei\bron, Early Modern Phy sics, 2.***

[M] **Schmitt, *John Case,* 74 (giving as other examples the works of Burgersdijk, Magirus, Eustachius a S. Paulo, and the Coimbra Jesuits). For biography and bibliography, see C. H. Lohr, 'Renaissance Latin Aristotle Commentaries', *Renaissance Quart.* 30 (1977), 738—40. Schmitt, *Aristotle,* 141, describes Keckermann as 'one of the leading figures of Protestant scholasticism' and says his manuals were 'widely used throughout northern Europe during the first half of the seventeenth century'.**

some of the alchemists, pursue fame by assigning outlandish and, often, specious occult properties to natural things which only they can claim to understand. He also rejects as intellectually indolent those who hold that all the properties and powers of the natural bodies in the world are occult: ‘Of these men it is truly said that occult properties are the refuge of ignorance and incompetence.’[85] Quite apart from natural properties whose causes are fully known, there are, even among those that are occult, some that yield to the researches of the more adept natural philosophers. To suppose otherwise is to disparage the study of physics. Thus Keckermann had escaped from the epistemological impasse in which, for strict Aristotelians, occult qualities were real but unstudiable. For him, ignorance was relative to time, relative to the degree of probability aimed at, and relative, indeed, to the efforts and abilities of the enquirer. Knowledge of occult properties was not, then, a contradiction in terms; it was the goal of the more excellent practitioners of physics, who called it ‘natural magic’.

To associate *magia* with diabolism, Keckermann continued, was to obscure its serious scientific purpose. It had lost its good ‘Persian’ reputation partly because there were many simple people who attributed anything they found wonderful in the world to demonic illusion, and partly because there were a few clever people who, like Agrippa, really did use the devil’s help to effect *rnira,* but passed them off as the product of purely natural and physical causes. The integrity of the physics of occult causes was threatened on the one side by naivety and on the other by unscrupulousness: ‘But we denounce such a view of occult qualities, and are satisfied that that part of natural science which reveals the wonderful powers of nature is not wrongly termed by many *magia naturalist* Properly defined (in Latin considerably less elegant than Bacon’s), it was ‘the knowledge and application of those extraordinary virtues *(virtutes)* that are in natural things, and that are hidden to most other men, so that by the joining and combining of such active and passive natural bodies in their own place and time, some great thing is produced to the astonishment of others.’[86] Kckermann’s list of recommended authors is as conventional; not merely the ancients Pliny, Proclus, and Augustine, but recent authorities like Albertus Magnus, Ficino *(Theologia Platonica),* Antoine Mizauld *(De arcanis naturae),* Johann Jacob Wcckcr (for the *Secrets* of Alcssio of Piedmont), and, of course, the four most popular natural magicians of all, Cardano, Fracastoro, Della Porta, and Levinus Lemnius. Keckermann went on to consider the philosophically more technical aspects of occult qualities: their origin in the forms of bodies, their manifestation in sympathetic and antipathetic actions, and so on. But his general exposition of the role of natural magic may be considered typical of the views that had come to be held in the many (in this case Protestant) faculties where a humanist tradition in science was the basis of teaching.

“ **Bartholomacus Keckermann, *Systema physicum septem libris adomatum,* 3rd cdn. (Hanau, 1612), 49-53 (quotation, 53); Thorndike, *History of Magic,* vii. 375-8.**

[16] **Keckermann, *Systema physicum*, 54.**

15

Demonic Magic

> And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.... And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments:
>
> (Exodus 7:20,22)

> Many things are done in this world by the force of demons which we in our ignorance attribute to natural causes.
>
> (Albert Kyper, *Institutiones physicae)*

> we have been ignorant of almost all the true causes of things, and therefore through blindness have usually attributed those things to the operation of Cacodcmons that were truely wrought by nature.
>
> (John Webster, *Displaying of supposed witchcraft)*

NATURAL magic: demonic magic. The two branches of magic had parallel intellectual histories—they were jointly allowed for in the scholastic scheme of knowledge, rose together to a position of prominence in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century natural philosophical debates, and ceased to be taken seriously (or were resolved into other disciplines) when the same changes in scientific and theological taste made them both seem equally implausible. But they were also ontologically and epistemologically equivalent. Natural magic had to be defended repeatedly from the accusation that it was the work of demons (and owed the insistence that it *was* natural largely to this defence), while the devil himself could count as just another preternatural agent. As we saw earlier, his effects, whether worked unaided or through magicians or witches, were not qualitatively different from other extraordinary natural effects. Their causation was simply concealed and obscure—'hid from us', as Daneau put it.[1] They were, in a word, occult.

It was religion, morality and ethics, then—as well as a great deal of social and institutional competition—that separated the effects of the natural magician from those of his allegedly demonic counterparts or of the devil himself. Indeed, the two sets of effects were at opposite ends of the moral spectrum, separated by an almost manichaeistic dualism; they were, yet again, contraries, whose juxtaposition illuminated each other.[2] But it was only their final causes that came between them;

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[1] Daneau, *Dialogue of witches,* sig. I vi^{r}.

[2] These are the terms used, respectively, by Torreblanca, *Daemonologia,* 196, and Schiitze,^ra««, *Disputatio physica de magia,* sigs. A2^{r} ('Praefamen'), B2^{r}-B3^{r}; cf. Bugges, *praeses, Disputatio physica,*

otherwise they were indistinguishable. ‘In itself, magic is a single thing’, wrote the Ferrarese physician Hyppolitus Obicius; although there seemed to be two sorts, the devil only worked through natural secrets, just as the natural magicians did.[3] Diabolical magic, confirmed a colleague from Seville, was ‘the ape of natural magic’.[4] The section on *magia* in a standard physics textbook of the mid-seventeenth century began with these precepts: that it combined a knowledge of secret and obscure things with the production of wonderful works, that it took the usual licit and illicit forms, and that the difference between these was that natural magic was acquired directly from the ‘book of nature’ and demonic magic supplied indirectly from the same source by demons.[5] According to the encyclopaedist Johann Heinrich Alsted, the first requirement of ‘philosophical magic’ was piety, whereas ‘diabolical magic’ was worked by the same physical means but irreligiously and wickedly.[6] Sir Thomas Browne wrote that ‘actives, aptly conjoined to disposed passives, will, under any master, produce their effects.’ Under any designation too; what scholars themselves did was ‘philosophy’, what was learned from the devil, ‘magic’.[7] One of the things that most annoyed John Webster about those who attacked all magic as demonic was their assumption not merely that there was ‘no Magick but what is diabolical’ but that ‘that which they call diabolical were any other way evil but only in the end and use’.[8] For Van Helmont, too, the basis of all magic (‘the most profound inbred knowledge of things’) remained the same whether it was used for good or evil.[9] The point was put with particular force by the Florentine Francesco Giuntino, Carmelite friar and student of astrology (he was also almoner to Francis of Anjou). Magic and necromancy were sciences just like medicine and natural philosophy, he argued, and had no necessary connection with devils. All that devils achieved in these areas was by the application of active things to their appropriate and proportionate passives, ‘which is a work of nature’. This could be done by any gifted adept with the same knowledge of nature’s mysterious processes, but without any suspicion of demonism on his part. Even if he obtained this knowledge from the ‘evil angels’, it would still be true science: ‘Even if men acquire it by the invocation of unclean spirits in this way, it is still true knowledge as far as operations arising from natural things are concerned, albeit the method of acquisition is not scientific, nor by scientific means.’ This, of course, would be prohibited, ‘not however for the thing known, but for the manner of knowing or acquiring it’.[10]

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sig. A3'”. For an especially fulsome juxtaposition, see the anonymous work issued by the Frankfurt publisher Anton Hummius in 1631, *Ars magica sive magia naturalis et artificiosa ... Cui praeit magia superstitiosa.*

[3] *HO* HyppoliwsOb!eius, [illegible] (Venice, 1605),

[4] Gaspar Caldyade Heredu, ***Tribunal magicum, quo omnia ad magiam spectant, accurate tranctantur et*** *explanantur, seu Inbunalu media [pars secunda]* (Leiden, 1658), 5.

[5] Sperling, */nslitutiones physicae,* 345-56.

[6] Alsted, *Encyclopaedia,* 2266-70

[7] Browne, *Religio medici,* in *Work,* ii. 45.

[8] Webster, *Displaying.* 152- see akn 79

[9] Cited by Debus, *Man and Nature,* 127.

[10] Francesco Giuntino, *Speculum astrologiae* (Lyons, 1573), fos. 45M8' (quotations at 48').

The crucial distinction for many early modern intellectuals, then, was not the one the modern mind expects—between 'science' and 'magic'—but the one that separated the two magics. And this was essentially a polemical, not a metaphysical issue.[11] Ethical and political questions apart, therefore, natural magic was the witchcraft theorists' essential (because only) point of reference in early modern science, and it ought, in consequence, to be the historians' too.

* * *

To some extent it has been. The fact that both natural magic and demonology sought to explain the same type of phenomena and by using the same aetiology has not gone unnoticed. But it has been used to explain the intellectual weakness and eventual decline of the latter, not its strength and resilience. In this view, natural magic was a powerful threat to witchcraft beliefs, a source of potentially corrosive scepticism. This was because it could account for mysterious natural effects without bringing in the devil, thus usurping the theories of demonology. The suggestion is that, like some of the other sciences in the 'Hermetic' tradition, natural magic had greater explanatory power than Aristotelian natural philosophy in this area. It was no accident, according to Trevor-Roper's influential version of the argument, 'that "natural magicians" like Agrippa and Cardano and "alchemists" like Paracelsus, Van Helmont and their disciples were among the enemies of the witch-craze, while those who attacked Platonist philosophy, Hermetic ideas and Paracelsian medecine were also, often, the most stalwart defenders of the same delusion.'[12]

There is undoubtedly support for this view in instances like that in 1598—9, when some of the physicians of Paris, led by Michel Marescot, pronounced on the case of the demoniac Marthc Brossier. They concluded that she was a fraud on the grounds that her symptoms were not remarkable enough to warrant a demonic explanation. Many stranger things happened, they declared, that were nevertheless attributed 'to the hidden secrets of Nature *(aux occultes secrets de nature)'*, not to devils. The researches of the natural magicians Lemnius, Mizaud, Fracastoro, and Della Porta had shown that the world was full of effects 'which, if because they are secret, wee should attribute to the Devill: then, to unfolde the Questions of Naturall Philosophic and Phisicke, from the beginning to the end of these two Sciences, we should alwaies have recourse to Devils.'[13] A comparable example in England was that of Edward Jorden, a physician strongly influenced by Paracelsian and iatrochemical ideas, who, in 1603, explained the alarming symptoms of the supposed demoniac Mary Glover in terms of the hysterical condition known as ‘the suffocation of the mother’.[14]

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[11] MacDonald Ross, 'Occultism and Philosophy', 111 n. 26 (who, nevertheless, adopts the practice of designating some scientific and philosophical beliefs as 'superstitious' and 'occult' and others as 'rational'); Hansen, 'Science and Magic', 488-9.

[12] Trevor-Roper, *European Witch-Craze,* 59, and see the long note at 59-60; cf. Kocher, *Science and Religion,* 70-1; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 578-9; Zambelli, 'Le Probleme de la magie naturelie', 58-79 (attempting to underpin Trevor-Roper); Thomas Hannon Jobe, 'The Devil in Restoration Science: The Glanvill—Webster Witchcraft Debate', *Isis,* 72 (1981), 343—4; Easlea, *Witch Hunting,* 161; Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton,* 80.

[n] [Michel Marcscot *et al.], A true discourse, upon the matter of M. Brossier of Romorantin, pretended to be possessed by a devill,* trans. Abraham Hartwell (London, 1599), 22; Walker, *Unclean Spirits,* 39; H. Trevor-Roper, 'The Sieur de La Riviere', in id., *Renaissance Essays* (London, 1985), 209.

There is also evidence of unorthodoxy and scepticism regarding demonism and witchcraft among the leading exponents of natural magic. The Lyons physician Symphoricn Champier, an editor of the Hermetic texts, whom Yates called ‘a leading apostle of Neo-Platonism in France, and an admirer of Ficino’, doubted the genuineness of sabbats enough to say that ‘rather often’ they turned out to be (demonic) illusions. Anticipating Weyer, he suggested that judges in witchcraft trials should consult experts in medicine and theology so that the accused could be treated for disorders and given religious guidance if necessary.[15] Paracelsus himself attributed the powers of witches (which he accepted as real) not to the demonic pact but to congenitally acquired personality traits and the sheer force of their imaginations, while at the same time narrowing the sphere of witchcraft altogether by ascribing much of their behaviour and that of their victims to non-demonic pathologies. He also introduced half-human and half-spirit intelligences into traditional demonology, allotting them partly beneficent roles, as well as responsibility for things often associated with witches.[16]

The history of the Paracelsian movement suggests that the only Paracelsians likely to show interest in demonic causation were those who were prepared to compromise with traditional medical views—men like Andreas Libavius and Daniel Sennert.[17] Thus Walter Pagel portrays Joan Baptista van Hclmont, ‘the outstanding Paracelsian of the second generation of Paracelsists and indeed the most successful in perpetuating the main Paracelsian principles and concepts’, as a philosopher who had a non-demonic explanation for everything in nature.[18] This is borne out not only by his interpretation of the workings of the pseudo-Paracelsian ‘weapon-salve’ but also by his attempt to offer purely natural accounts of two characteristic witchcraft phenomena—the vomiting of strange objects by the bewitched and the harmful effects of enchantments. Like Paracelsus, Van Helmont relied on the supposedly operative powers of the human imagination when aroused by powerful feelings. Witchcraft could, thus, be likened to the kind of natural force that the desire for survival in the human 'archeus' could imprint on the human body, allowing it (by the 'penetration of dimensions') to transmit and void safely otherwise lethal solid objects accidentally swallowed. Or, again, it could be compared to the power of a pregnant woman's shock or fear to cause physical abnormalities in her unborn child; one of Van Helmont's propositions was, accordingly, 'But whatsoever is natural, and ordinary to a Woman with Child, that none doubteth, but that it may be natural to a Witch not great with Child; Indeed that she can form any kind of Idea.' Such was the strength of the witch's 'seminal Idea' in imagining and willing harm on her victims that it resulted in the interpenetration of their bodies by impossibly large and harmful matter, and the transmission of other hurts by incantations—all this, without any demonic efficacy being involved.[19]

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[14] See the full account in Michael MacDonald (ed.), *Witchcraft and Hysteria in Elizabethan London: EdwardJorden and the Mary Glover Case* (London, 1991); for Jorden’s Paracelsianism. see Debus. *English Paracelsians,* 162—4.

[15] Symphoricn Champier, *Dyalogus ...in magicarum artium destructionem* (Lyons, *c.* 1 SOO), trans. Brian P. Copenhaver and Darrel Amundsen, in Brian P. Copenhaver, *Symphoricn Champier and the Reception of the Occultist Tradition in Renaissance France* (The Hague, 1978), 289, commentary at 191-8- Yates *Giordano Bruno,* 172.

[16] I rely here on the summary of Paracelsus’s views on witchcraft in Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton,* 80-5, and on the Paracelsian fragment *De sagis et earum operibus,* in *Philosophiae magnae* (Basel [1569]), 214-39 (German version in Paracelsus, *Sdmtliche Werlte,* ed. K. SudhofT and W Matthiessen, xiv (Munich and Berlin, 1933), 5-27). See also Klaus Schneller, ‘Paracelsus: Von den Hwen und ihren Werken’, in G. Becker, *et al., Zen der Verzmeijlung: zur Genese und Aktualitdt des Hexenbildes* (Frankfurt/Main, 1977), 240-58; and Charles Webster, ‘Paracelsus and Demons: Science as a Synthesis of Popular Belief*, in *Scienze, credenze occulte, livelli di cultura* (Florence, 1982), 3-20, where Webster stresses the popular origins of Paracelsus’s *homunculi* and their character as analogies of human society in contrast to the demons of witchcraft literature which were its inversions.

[17] Allen G. Debus, ‘The Medico-Chemical World of the Paracelsians’, in MikulaS Teich and Robert Young (eds.), *Changing Perspectives in the History of Science* (London, 1973), 85-99.

[18] Pagel, Joan *Baptista van Helmont,*205-6, see also 4 (Van Helmont attended Del Rio’s lectures on magic at Louvain and came away disillusioned).

As for the other earlier natural magicians, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa defended a peasant woman accused of witchcraft at Woippy near Metz in 1519, and wrote a now lost work *Adversus lamiariini inqttisitores.* This is known from the attacks made on it in 1566 by the Dominican inquisitor Sisto Da Siena (the inquisitor in the 1519 case, Nicolaus Savini, was also a Dominican), who reported that Agrippa had mocked witchcraft 'as a tale born of the imagination and the dreams of old delirious women, since often asleep, they are deceived by dreams, and at times, even when they are wronged by the thought of vehement libido, and even think that acts which are only formed in imagination, really occurred to them.'[20] Cardano's demonology was highly unorthodox, theologically speaking, since he restricted demonic activity to the aerial regions and spoke rather disparagingly of spirits as having few significant dealings with men and women and, in some matters at least, less knowledge. He was clearly reluctant (like the strictest Peripatetics) to accept demonic explanations for strange phenomena when others would do. Witchcraft stories, he said, were laughable when tested by the 'principles of nature' and credited only by those who, apart from greed, stupidity, and a love of novelty, showed 'ignorance of natural causes and effects'. Everything about witches was 'full of vanities, lies, contradictions, and inconsistencies', and the sabbat, in particular, was 'totally false'.[21]

The classic natural magician of the whole period, Della Porta, rejected the belief that witches induced flight by smearing themselves with an unguent, having tested it in a notorious experiment that was reported in the first edition of his *Magtae naturalis.* He and his colleagues physically assaulted an old woman after she had anointed herself and fallen into a trance, so that they could show her the bruises when she regained consciousness. The fact that she still insisted on having travdied to a sabbat proved that only dream experiences (produced entirely by the natural constituents of the ointment—of which Della Porta provided formulas) had actually occurred. The report and the formulas were removed from later editions of the book but he insisted that they had shown his 'detestation of the frauds of Divels and Witches' and that 'that which comes by Nature is abused by their superstition .[22]

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[19] Van Helmont, *Oriatrike,* 568-73 (quotation at 571). I have also relied on the extracts and summary given by Webster, *Displaying,* 252-9.

[20] Zambclli, 'Scholastic and Humanist Views of Hermcticism and Witchcraft', 137-8 (quotation from Da Siena at 137). The 1519 episode is recounted in Agrippa, *Vanilie and uncertaintie,* 351-2, and fully explored by Ziegeler, *Möglichkeiten der Kritih am Hexen- undZauberwahn,* 137-99. See also Zambclli, 'Le Problème de la magic naturelle', 77-9; Nauert, *Agrippa,* 59-60; H. A. Oberman, *Masters of the Reformation,* trans. D. Martin (Cambridge, 1981), 173. In the chapter 'Of witchinge magicke' *(De magia venejica)* in *Vanitie and uncertainlie,* Agrippa deals with magical potions and ceremonial magic, not with the witchcraft of the sabbat.

[21] *Cardino, De rerum varielate,* in *Opera omnia*, iii. 317-36,289-93 (quotations at 290,291,292).

In addition, witchcraft sceptics themselves turned to the findings of natural magic in order to explain away supposedly demonic phenomena—a tendency recognized by Henry Holland, who called it the confounding of'diabolicall and naturall magicke' and put its typical arguments into the mouth of 'Myso-daemon', one of the interlocutors in his dialogue-form witchcraft treatise.[23] Weyer had been senant and assistant to z\grippa in Bonn in the early 1530s and spoke of him as his 'revered teacher'. He was also indebted heavily to Cardano, using almost all the latter's chapter on witchcraft at some point or other in *Depraestigiis daemonum.*[1'] Reginald Scot recounted Agrippa's clash with the Dominicans, cited Cardano on witchcraft with admiration, and appealed to Della Porta's experiment with the witch's ointment.[25] He undoubtedly knew and understood the natural magical literature and deplored condemnations of it as demonic by those who did not. Its secrets and marvels—Scot devoted many chapters to the usual examples—were nothing but the work of nature, even if deceit and trickery could corrupt their use. 'Witchcraft' was, thus, a misnomer (in fact, a mistranslation) either for real effects that could be achieved without demonic intervention, or for the spurious feats of legerdemain. Scot, it appears, was one of those writers of whom it has been uncharitably said that they were sceptical about witchcraft 'because they were so credulous in other matters'.[26]

There were other instances of critics of witchcraft beliefs and witch trials who resorted to the alternative explanations proffered by the natural magicians.[27] But the outstanding example is that of John Webster, whose *The displaying of supposed*

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[u] Giambattista Della Porta, *Magiae naturalis, site de miraculis rerum naturalium* (Naples, 1558), 100-2; id., *Natural magick,* Cii. For a similar experiment by the Spanish physician and humanist scholar Andres Fernandez de Laguna, see H. Friedenwald, 'Andres a Laguna, a Pioneer in his Views on Witchcraft', *Bull. Hist. Medicine,* 7 (1939), 1037-48; Theodore Rothman, 'De Laguna's Commentaries on Hallucinogenic Drugs and Witchcraft in Dioscorides' Materia Medica', *Bull. Hist. Medicine,* 46 (1972), 562-7.

[11] Holland, *Treatise,* sig. A3' and *passim.* Binsfeld, *Tractatus,* 4, also attributed the reduction of all demonic magic to natural causes to 'Hermes Trismegistus' and other similar philosophers.

[24] Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum,* 111, 203-7,259-60,503-4,510-11.

[25] Scot, *Discoveries* 35-7,16,184—5.

[24] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 578; Scot, *Discoveries* 234-62

[”] See Tandler, *Dissertatio defascino;* [Spee], *Cautio criminalis,* 329-30 (on Della Porta's experiment); Bekker, *Le Monde enchante,* tv. 17-36 (appealing also to Cartesian 'atomism'); Klaniczay *Uses of Supernatural Power,* 177, on Tartarotti as 'remaining within the hermetic-neo-Platonist'tradition' and accepting 'the reality of so-called natural magic'.

witchcraft (1677) was something of a synthesis of earlier views, and who cited approvingly the entire early modern natural magical tradition from Lull and Roger Bacon onwards. Closest to Scot, Webster thought that 'witchcraft' was no more than either an 'active' delusion wrought by the tricks and cheats of impostors, or a 'passive' delusion in the minds of the ignorant, melancholic, and credulous. Real *wialeficium* could always be redescribed as some other condition, like the contagious poisoning that occurred in 'fascination', when infected women hurt their victims 'with the virulent steams of their breath, and the effluviums that issue from their filthy and polluted bodies'.[28] Like Cardano, Webster stressed the severe limitations and weaknesses of demonic knowledge and power, and like Paracelsus he allowed for 'middle creatures' who 'because of their strange natures, shapes and properties, or by reason of their being rarely seen have been and often are not only by' the common people but even by the learned taken to be Devils, Spirits or the effects of Inchantment and Witchcraft'.[29] Above all, he developed the fully sceptical implications of his own claim (already noted) that there was 'no other ground or reason of dividing Magick into natural and Diabolical, but only that they differ in the end and use'. If both were worked (in the case of devils, allegedly) by natural agency, then men might do 'without the aid of Devils whatsoever they can do'; that is, they could apply actives to passives and produce wonders. The history of natural magic from Pharaoh to Robert Boyle showed that this was true, and contemporary discoveries concerning the secret properties of many natural things and 'the strange and wonderful things that Art can bring to pass' meant that there would be even less reason to believe in demonic agency and witchcraft in the future.[30]

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Nevertheless, we must be careful not to exaggerate. The Benedictine abbot Johannes Trithemius, who (according to Paola Zambelli) co-operated with Agrippa 'in the elaboration of the Hermeticism and natural magic of the Florentines in Germany', and to whom Agrippa presented a first draft of *De occulta philosophia,* entered the witchcraft debate on the opposite side. In two interventions dating from 1508, he wrote of the sins of witches and the range and gravity of their *tnaleficium* under four headings, each more serious than the last, with the fourth embracing full homage to devils and carnal dealings with them. The general tone and the sense of urgency regarding the punishment of witchcraft are reminiscent of the *Malleus maleficarum.* 'In every region the number of them is very great', Trithemius told his readers (and his dedicatee the duke of Brandenburg), 'and I do not know whether even a tiny village can be found where there are not witches, either of the fourth kind or the other types of filthy treachery. Yet how rare it is that an inquisitor or almost any magistrate avenges such open insults to God and nature.'[31] Champier's modern commentator, Brian Copenhaver, has said that he was so far from being a sceptic 'that he sometimes suggested that it was possible to make pacts or contracts with demons—even without knowing it'. Champier also followed Augustine and Aquinas in regarding incubus and succubus devils as having actual physical dealings with humans and, by the transference of semen, assisting in real births.[32] There was also enough common ground between Paracelsus and his more orthodox contemporaries for him to prove, in Charles Webster's assessment, 'an enigmatic witness on the question of witchcraft and demonic magic'. He drew on highly traditional notions of the wisdom and power of demons, and gave both the usual (Protestant) reasons for their providentially governed moral purposes and the usual philosophical explanations of their essentially limited dealings with nature. In addition, he referred often to the witches' sabbat and its rituals, accepted associated phenomena like transmutation, and, on one occasion at least, advocated the death penalty in cases of sorcery.[33] Cardano finished his discussion of witchcraft by talking inconsistently about witches who persevered stubbornly with sabbats despite the dangers and who deserved death for their heresy and impiety. He was undoubtedly very scornful of traditional witchcraft beliefs but the criticisms he actually offered did not depend on a close application of natural magical principles to witchcraft phenomena. Instead, they were founded on more usual misgivings about the judicial process (Alciatus was a colleague at Pavia), on some fairly acute observations about the social and cultural deprivations of the accused, and, above all, on a clinical reduction of their confessions, thoroughly Galenic in its principles, to the humorial imbalances that led to melancholy. One could see that witches suffered from an excess of black bile, Cardano said, simply by looking at them.

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[28] Webster, *Displaying,* 23, and see also 180-3.

[29] Ibid. 287; on the limitations of devils, see 215-41.

[30] Ibid. 151-63,267-9(quotationsat 152,268). Of Webster's *Academiarum examen* (1654) and *Metallographia* (1671), Charles Webster has said that they are based 'almost entirely on the literature within the natural magic tradition': *Paracelsus to Newton,* 71.

When we look more closely at Van Helmont, too, we find that, although the devil is dispensable as a physical agent, he is not in fact dispensed with—quite apart from acting as a powerful spiritual inciter to witchcraft. Van Helmont was not trying, as Weyer, Scot, and Webster all were, to explain witchcraft away; he was accepting it as real but giving an account of it consistent with his own natural philosophical and religious principles. And in this account, the devil played a traditional, if restricted, part. Van Helmont explained that, lacking the free will to will evil things, he was obliged to rely on human witches for theirs:

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[31] Johannes Trithemius, *Liber octo quaestionum* (Oppenheim, 1515), and id., *Antipalus malejiciorum* (Ingolstadt, 1555), both excerpted in Hansen, *Quellen*, 291-6 (quotation from second work at 295). For Trithemius's departures from 15th-c. demonology, see Jean Wirth, 'Sainte Anne est une sorciere', *Bibliotheque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 40 (1978), 474-8. On Trithemius, Agrippa, and natural magic, see Zambelli, 'Scholastic and Humanist Views of Hermeticism and Witchcraft', 133-7 (quotation at 133); cf. Zambelli, 'Le Probleme de la magie naturelle', 75 ('Parmi les platoniciens eux-memes, la tragique actualite de la question des sorcieres provoquait des conflits.'); Thorndike, *History of Magic*, v. 130, vi. 438-40; Klaus Arnold, *Johannes Trithemius* (Würzburg, 1971), 196-200. On Trithemius's witchcraft beliefs, see id., 'Humanismus und Hexenglaube bei Johannes Trithemius (1462-1516)', in Peter Segl (ed.), *Der Hexenhammer: Entstehung und Umfetd des 'Malleus malejicarum' von Id87* (Cologne, 1988), 217-40; Achim R. Baumgarten, *Hexenwahn und Hexenverfolgung im Naheraum* (Frankfurt/Main, 1987), 107-16.

[32] Champier, *Dyalogus*, in Copenhaver, *Symphorien Champier*, 297-303, quotation at 193.

[33] Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton*, 80-3 (quotation at 80).

> For the Dog of Hell is bound, neither can he operate on Forms, the Bodies of these, or their properties, unless he take to him the mind of Man as a co-operatress with him, under whose feet things more inferiour than it self are placed. In this respect, therefore, he miserably circuimcnts his bond-slaves by deciet [nr], and binds them in a Covenant, at least-wise that so they may the rather depart from God; as if for a reward of the stricken covenant, he were perfectly to teach them secrets, whereby ... they were to effect things incredible: And indeed all evils, to the despite of God, and the destruction of Men. By which means, after their Covenant, he easily infatuates his own, and befools them through a rash belief of him: Because they are those whom he fully possesseth, and unto those he committeth his commands. For he perswades these who have renounced divine Grace, of whatsoever he will, and promiseth that he will perform Mischievous or wicked Acts, by strength or faculties which he feigneth to be natural or proper unto himself: For he snatcheth his Imps into the detestable adoration of a Hee-goat; as if the government of all things stood in his Power, and that he alone could confer the gift of the working of Miracles?[4]

In reality, the devil was weaker than the witches; he must borrow their operative ‘Ideas’ in order to ‘translate’ his own will into theirs. But besides stirring up their hatreds, he acted physically to assist them in *maleficium.* He gave them ‘filths’ to infect with maleficent power, preserved and distributed their poisons, and, in the special case of vomitings, brought the solid objects to be injected into the bewitched invisibly to them. There is something here, after all, of the usual demonology, above all, the language and reality of the demonic pact. Significantly, Webster, otherwise an ardent admirer of Van Helmont, had to reprimand him for necessarily supposing ‘a league or contract betwixt the Devil and the Witch’ and for calling witches ‘the Devils clients and those that are bound unto him’. For Webster, if these terms meant anything, they spoke metaphorically of the ‘implicite, internal and mental’ power of evil over the human will. Van Helmont, on the other hand, was talking in a ‘corporeal and visible’ way about demonism and therefore committing himself to old errors?[5]

Even Levinus Lemnius, physician at Zierikzee in Zeeland in the middle years of the sixteenth century, who had a reputation as an outright sceptic in witchcraft and allied matters, did not exclude evil spirits from the physical world. In his much reprinted and translated *De miraculis occultis naturae* they appear not among the principal causes of diseases, it is true, but among the accidental causes, insinuating themselves ‘closely into men’s bodies’ and mingling with ‘food, humours, spirits, with the ayre and breath’, as well as with violent and destructive tempests. Lemnius clearly preferred non-demonic explanations for the strange symptoms that people only ‘moderately versed in the Works of Nature’ associated with bewitchment and possession; he was writing, he said, to improve understanding of the ‘many hidden and secret things in nature... which do not present a manifest demonstration to the sense and understanding, and therefore are called by Physitians, hidden qualities’. But although devils do not bulk large in his natural philosophy, neither are they ignored. Their contribution to pathology, like that of witchcraft (which Lemnius also

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[14] **Van Helmont, *Oriatrike,* 570.**

[15] **Webster, *Displaying,* 259, and see 259-66.**

acknowledges) is that they worsen natural disorders, increasing the virulence of sicknesses like melancholy.[36]

As for the scepticism of the specialist witchcraft authors themselves, this was not always based solely or even predominantly on natural magical arguments. The idea that effective criticism could only have come from something as ‘hard’ as science is a prejudice born of modern rationalism. Natural magic does not appear extensively in Weyer, who despite his early dealings with, and admiration for, Agrippa, devoted an entire book *of De praestigiis daemonum* to a denunciation of the magical tradition from the Persians to the Paracelsians. In some incisive remarks on this episode, Erik Midelfort argues that Weyer came away from his encounter ‘unimpressed by Plato and appalled at learned magic’. The Agrippa he ‘revered’ was the author of *De vanitate,* not the author of *De occulta philosophiaf*[1] Reginald Scot followed him in this respect, but, ultimately, his own most subversive arguments stemmed, as we saw in an earlier chapter, from a radically unorthodox theology, not from an alternative natural philosophy. And on the evidence of *Cautio criminalis,* Friedrich von Spec was moved far more by procedural injustices in the conduct of witchcraft investigations than by any other consideration. One of the most subversive Restoration critics of witchcraft beliefs, John Wagstaffe, had views on nature and natural causation that were within the conventions of scholastic natural science; his scepticism stemmed not from scientific novelty but from a kind of political machiavellism? Conversely, one of the staunchest Restoration supporters of witchcraft’s reality, Henry More, drew significantly' on the terminology', thought-patterns, and methods of‘hermetic, cabbalist, and Rosicrucian adepts’ like Henry Vaughan, even while he criticized and rejected many of their arguments.[39]

Of John Webster, too, it has to be asked whether his argument, like Scot’s, depended as much on theology as on natural philosophy. More aware than everofthe dangers that might attach to a defence of the absolute incorporeality of spirits, he insisted that the fallen angels were corporeal. Nevertheless, he ruled out the physical contact presupposed by orthodox demonology, their ‘leagues’ with ‘witches’ and other evil persons being entirely spiritual in character. This was because the bodies of devils were not like those of other corporeal substances. They were not affected by fire and they were not ‘as solid and tangible as flesh and bones’, being ‘ethereal, airy

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[34] Levinus Lemnius, *The secret miracles of nature,trans, anon. (London,* 1658), 385,86, ‘Preface to the Reader’; the important sections arc bk. 2, chs. 1-3, and ‘Paraenesis or Exhortation’, chs. 57-8.

[17] Midelfort, ‘Johann Weyer and the Transformation of the Insanity Defense’, 237-8. Weyer dA however, note in passing *(De praestigiis daemonum,* 103): ‘But as regards the thorough exploration and understanding of the hidden things of nature—true philosophy in other words, and magic of a more hallowed sort—wise men should accept and pursue this course with a solemn approval, and I do not here make light of it or wish to detract from it in the least.’

“ Michael Hunter, ‘The Witchcraft Controversy and the Nature of Free-Thought in Restoration. England: John Wagstaffc’s *The Question of Witchcraft Debated* (1669)’, in id., *Science and the Shaft ‘1 Orthodoxy: Intellectual Change in Late 17th-Century Britain* (Woodbridge, 1995), 286-307. For the sources ofWagstaffe’s scepticism, see below, Ch. 39. . .

” Arlene Miller Guinsburg, ‘Henry More, Thomas Vaughan and the Late Renaissance Ma?01 Tradition’, *Ambix,* 27 (1980), 36-58, esp. 52-4.

and shadowy, and yielding and giving way to touch', subject to contraction and distension, changes of colour, and so on. Thus devils had 'pure and spiritual' bodies, and there was no need or capacity for them to assume ones made of the inferior elements in order to influence human behaviour.-[10] However satisfactory this compromise was, it did not derive from Webster's enthusiasm for natural magic, but from contemporary religious and political anxieties about the relationship between the material and the spiritual worlds. Eventually, and again like Scot, he may well have been most concerned to protect the idea of an anti-permissive deity; 'there is no one thing', he wrote, 'that hath more promoted this false and wicked Tenent of a kind of omnipotency in Devils, and the exorbitant power ascribed to Witches, than the misunderstanding of the true and right Doctrine of Divine Providence.'[40] [41]

Above all, it is artificial to contrast the explanatory powers of natural magic with those of Aristotelianism when Aristotelian physics itself embraced notions of occult causation and sympathetic and antipathetic action. Some purists, it is true, stuck rigidly to the master's refusal to admit demons into nature; Pomponazzi is the classic example of a philosopher who used natural magical explanations to fill the gap. 'If anyone', he wrote (with the appropriate disclaimers), 'shall have considered the marvellous and occult works of nature, the virtues of the heavenly bodies, God, and the intelligences, caring for human and all other inferiour affairs, he will see that there is no need of demons or other intelligences.'[42] Here were views that witchcraft writers, for all their own reliance on natural magic and occult causation—for all their own naturalisms—found repugnant. For them the explanations of natural magic and demonic magic were mutually reinforcing, not mutually exclusive. It was, after all, just as likely in metaphysical terms that devils should exploit what was occult in nature as be replaced by it; while theologically it was required. Pomponazzi's views were influential with witchcraft sceptics like Cardano, Campanella, Cesalpino, Vanini, Weyer, and Scot but otherwise condemned in orthodox demonology.[43] In any case, the Peripatetic philosophy that still dominated Europe's pedagogic circles was not, by and large, purist. Augustinian and Thomistic ingredients alone ensured the recognition of demonic causation in preternatural contexts. Demons were now emphatically within a nature that was not compromised by their inclusion. Aristotelians therefore had their own natural magic to complement their demonology, not undermine it. Since witchcraft beliefs were sustained largely by those with a traditional education and outlook, this was an important intellectual resource.

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[40] Webster, *Displaying,* 197-215 (corporeality of spirits), 43-53, 66, 73, 147-8 (spiritual 'leagues'), 105,212-15 (bodies of devils). At 241-2 Webster nevertheless allowed devils to work 'in elemental and corporeal things ... by natural means, as the applying of fit actives to agreeable passives', thus taking advantage of a commonplace of traditional demonology. Such causation included the bringing of diseases in human bodies and the instigation of the vomitings of the 'bewitched'.

[41] Ibid. 183, and see 183-97.

[42] Pietro Pomponazzi, *De naturalium effectuum causis site de incantationibus* (Basel, n.d. [1556]), 213 (written *c.* 1520).

[42] Pomponazzi's influence on later demonology is briefly sketched in Pietro Pomponazzi, *Les Causes des merveilles de la nature ou les enchantements,* ed. and trans. Henri Busson (Paris, 1930), 39-62. For his influence on Scot, see Anglo, 'Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 132—4.

For this reason we should also react cautiously to the many attacks on natural magic scattered through the literature of witchcraft. Some authorities, it is true spoke of *magia* without distinction in wholly negative terms, as John Webster complained.[44] Others repeated the standard indictment that the historical magic of the Persians and Egyptians had degenerated in time and was now indistinguishable from diabolism. It was charged that natural magicians were always likely to push their enquiries beyond what John Gaule called 'the pure Naturalls' and thus become prey to devils.[45] At the very least, doubts were voiced about the publication of natural magical works on the grounds that free access to such secrets was dangerous. Witchcraft authors often singled out natural magicians like Agrippa for individual attack[44] or, like the physician Erastus, showed their hostility in specialist publications relating to their particular profession. Others chose allied disciplines like alchemy and astrology for sustained criticism. In these various ways, demonology added a further broad layer of denunciation to a very old tradition of Christian hostility to the magical arts.

Nevertheless, these attacks were mounted in the end on moral and political grounds, not on natural philosophical ones. In each case, what was deemed wrong with magic was that it had come to depend on demonic help. Of course, this might in itself be the result of causal inadequacy—of natural magicians aiming too high—and in this sense the attacks presupposed a view of causal sufficiency. But the devil too operated by natural causes, even when appearing to do without them. Hostility to his intervention could not, therefore, have rested on objections about aetiology; it was solely (and understandably) the result of religious scruple. This could hardly have been otherwise, because, as has been stressed all along, witchcraft authors subjected demonism to a model of causation which, stripped of all but its logical form, was identical to that found wherever preternature was the object of study. Indeed, witchcraft theory was itself an adjunct to *magia,* a specialist account of one particular branch of magical activity supposedly intended by human agents but effected on their behalf by their demonic associates.

Even those witchcraft authors most adamantly hostile to magic often acknowledged the existence (if only in principle) of a respectable natural version. This is the case, for example, with Erastus. He insisted in his demonology that there was no form of magic, even the Persian, that was permissible, and in his bitter attack on Paracelsus that there was no form of magic that was real. He was so confident that magic was unnatural in principle that (pre-empting the findings of all future enquiry) he refused to allow that it might conform even to as yet unknown natural forces. Yet he still conceded that the experiments of a natural philosophy like Delk

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[44] **An example is Strozzi Cigogna, *Magiae omnifariae, velpotius, universae naturae theatrum* (Cologne, 1606), 455-74; a trans, of his *Del Palagio de gl'Incanti, e delle gran meraviglie de gli Spiriti, e di tulia Natura* (Vicenza, 1605).**

[45] **Gaule, *Cases of conscience,* 188; cf. Hemmingsen, *Admonitio,* sig. Bl'.**

[44] **See, for example, Bodin, *Demonomanie,* fos. 51 *, 20'; Frances A. Yates, *The Occult Philosophy t'''* *Elizabethan Age* (London, 1979), 67-71.**

Porta's might yield effects that were marvellous to the ignorant but true in nature—the classic apologia of the prcternaturalist.[47] *

But whether witchcraft theorists openly acknowledged the study of natural magic or not—and most of them gave it conventional praise^—the sort of scientific enquiry it represented (the formal concept of natural magic) remained an instrinsic part of their theories of knowledge. It was, in fact, a necessary part of the intellectual structure of witchcraft beliefs. Demonic efficacy itself could not be portrayed without it. We saw earlier that the aim was to downgrade this by insisting on its ultimately natural (that is to say, preternatural) character, while at the same time admitting its puzzling, even miraculous, appearance. But a closer look at the terms used to describe the devil's expertise shows that he was depicted, quite precisely, as a supremely gifted natural magician, skilled in precisely those things most inaccessible to laymen. Grillando spoke of his consummate knowledge of 'the secrets of nature', and discussed at length his talents in an area close to the heart of contemporary debates about occult qualities—the production of venoms from the natural properties of things. 'For there is in herbs and stones, and other natural things', wrote Zanchy, 'a marvellous force, although hidden, by which many strange things can be performed. And this force is especially well marked and perceived by the devil.' To Kingjamcs he was 'farre cunningner [rzr] then man in the knowledge of all the occult proprieties of nature'. In Rémy's view, demons had 'a perfect knowledge of the secret and hidden properties of natural things'. Commenting on Ciruclo's demonology, the Spanish canon lawyer Pedro Antonio Jofrcu added that the devil knew all the secrets and qualities of things, including their powers of attraction (sympathy) and repulsion (antipathy).[49] In effect, then, what was occult to humans, was manifest to demons; the distinction itself, wrote the Sieur Congnard in 1652 (borrowing the idea from the university of Paris medical professor Bartholomaeus Perdulcis) was not known in hell.[50]

Demonic magic's identity as the exact analogue of natural magic was likewise reflected in the formulaic terms that were constantly used to define them; they were both practical applications of abstruse natural knowledge that connected natural agents with natural passives, or manipulated sympathies and antipathies, to produce effects that were wonderful to the uninitiated.[51] John Gaule defined the natural magician as

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[47] Erastus, *Deux Dialogues,* 463,464, see also 485-6; id., *Disputationum de medicina nova,* 133.1 owe the last point to Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic,* 158.

” For some typical examples, Binsfeld, *Tractatus,* 157-9; Godelmann, *Tractatus,* bk. 1, 15-17; Zanchy, *De operibus Dei,* cols. 200-3; Guazzo, *Compendium malejicarum,* 3; Jacob Heerbrand, *praeses* (Nicolaus Faldo, *respondent), De magia disptitalio ex cap. 7. Exo.* (Tubingen, 1570), props. 2-3; Ellinger, *Hexen Coppel,* 1-3; Percrius, *Adversusfallaces et superstitiosas artes,* 13-23, sec also 105; Samson, *Neun ... Hexen Predigt,* sigs. Lii'-Liii'.

” Grillando, *Tractatus de sorlilegiis,* in *Alalleus malejicarum* (1669 edn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 2). 246, see also 250-3; Zanchy, *De operibus Dei,* col. 193; James VI and I, *Daemonologie,* 44; Remy, *Demonolatry,* 107; Ciruelo, *Treatise,* 101. For similar remarks, Crespct, *Deux Livres,* fo. 86'; Casmann, *Angelographia,* 428; Guazzo, *Compendium malejicarum,* 83.

w Sieur D. M. Congnard, *Histoire de Marthe Brossier pretendue possedée, tirée du Latin de Alessire Jacques August de Thou, président au parlement de Paris. Avec quelques remarques et considerations generales sur cette maliere, tirées pour la plus part aussi du Latin de Bartliolomaus Perdulcis* (Rouen, 1652), 26.

> one onely speculative upon the abstruse Mirables [«?] of Nature; who by searching into her occult Qualities, her hidden powers, and secret vertues, her Sympathies and Antipathies; and by applying fitly Actives unto Passives; now urges nature so artificially, that he makes her conclude and assent to work wonders: (And happily thus far may proceed both with true Science, and good conscience.)[52]

'Anyone with the least smattering of philosophy', insisted Francisco Torreblanca, 'knows that there are occult virtues in nature by which marvels might be worked, if they were well known and adapted to practical use.' Knowing the particular substance and properties of every natural thing, the devil, therefore, had no difficulty in effecting marvellous things that nature by itself would never have achieved.[53] As one writer was strikingly to admit, both were just esoteric forms of physics; 'if this part of Philosophy', he wrote (referring to *magia* in general), 'was practised in the schools in the manner ofthe other ordinary sciences ... it would lose the name of "magic" and would be assigned to physics and natural science.' It is tempting to read into this remark intimations of the scepticism which (it is claimed) ultimately undermined the belief in the reality of demonic effects by accounting for them just as adequately in natural scientific terms. But the writer was Pierre Binsfcld and it is inconceivable that *he* could have meant to convey any general form of doubt. What the remark does convey, perhaps unintentionally, is the relationship between the labels assigned to various modes of enquiry into the natural world—together with the legitimacy and moral standing they accordingly enjoyed—and the professional (and other interests) of those responsible for assigning these labels.[54]

Witchcraft authors were, then, in the same intellectual predicament as the theorists of natural magic, or indeed the Aristotelians, when they discussed occult (as opposed to manifest) qualities: that of coming to terms with effects that could be experienced but whose causes might be unknowable. A remark of William Perkins puts the epistemological challenge posed by the devil rather effectively:

> Whereas in nature there be some properties, causes, and effects, which man never imagined to

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[51] **Compare the definitions of natural magic by Agrippa, Pamne *and uncertaintie,* 125; Simon Som, *P'aeses* (Joannes Frey, *respondent), Assertiones philosophicae de secretiore philosophia, site de natural! magia* (Dillingen, 1603), 3; Jean Jacques Boissard, *Tractatus posthumus ...de divinatione et magicis praestigiis* (Oppenheim, n.d. [1616?]), 24-5; Della Porta, *Natural magick,* 1-4, Wendelin, *Contemplationum physicarum,* 23 (thesis 5), Nieremberg, *Cursosay ocultajilosojia,* pt. 2 *(Occulta jilosofia),* 380, or Gaspar Schott, *Magia universalis naturae et artis* (Wurzburg, 1657-9), 19, with the definitions of demonic natural activity by C. F. d'Abra de Raconis, *Tenia pars philosophiae, seu physica (Paris,* 1622), 101;Schtitze *praeses Disputatio physica de magia,* sig. B4'; Obicius, *De nobilitate medici,* 140-1. Within one tract seeDella Torre *Tractatus de potestate daemonum,* 194,200-1, or Binsfcld, *Tractatus,* 158—61.**

” Gaule, *Cases of conscience,* 33^1.

” Torreblanca, *Daemonologia,* 181,214. (At p. 181, Torreblanca writes, 'Quis enim vel literis dumtaxat tinctus philosophicis, ncscit multas esse virtutes rerum naturalium, occultas mirabilium rerum effectrices, quas si quis bene nosset, et ad usum accommodarc sciret, haut dubic mira posset efficere ')

M Binsfcld, *Tractatus,* 176; cf. Thomas Lodge, *Thedivel conjured* (London, 1596), sig Di' '

be; others, that men did once know, but are now forgot; some which men knewe not, but might know; and thousands which can hardly, or not at all be known: all these are most familiar unto him, because in themselvs they be no wonders, but only misteries and secrets, the vertue and effect whereof he hath sometime observed since his creation.[55]

Perkins may have been particularly well qualified to speak like this; it was reported of him that ‘when first a Graduate, he was much addicted to the study of naturall Magicke, digging so deepe, in natures mine, to know the hidden causes and sacred qualities of things, that some conceive that he bordered on Hell it selfe in his curiosity?[56]

In these circumstances, the fact that witchcraft authors often used the findings of natural magic to buttress some of their central arguments becomes readily intelligible—rather than some kind of contradiction. To begin with, there were occasions when writers who in no way doubted the general reality of witchcraft phenomena cited instances from natural magic to suggest that, nevertheless, there were many occult effects in nature that were wrongly confused with demonism simply because their causes were unknown or uncertain. This was, in effect, their attempt to allot phenomena to the final place on what I earlier called witchcraft’s explanatory grid. Castañega, for example, explained the ‘evil eye’ in non-demonic terms as the by-product of ‘natural expulsive’ powers whereby the human body got rid of its most subtle impurities.[57] Scribonius, too, argued that the twin dangers of ascribing too much or too little to witches could only be avoided if proper natural philosophical account was taken both of the ability of unaided nature to generate its own marvels (here he used the play imagery—/z/sz/s *natural?**—common in prodigy literature and in Bacon), and of the capacity of a mimetic and licit natural magic to repeat such marvels artificially. The latter he described traditionally as the most perfect philosophy in its knowledge of the mysteries and secrets of nature and as practiced by the Persian and Egyptian magi and by Moses, Solomon, and Daniel.[58]

A second case arose when authors, accepting without question that demonism and witchcraft had *some* sort of efficacy, wished to expose the claim that it lay in the actual means used, where this was (say) a ritual incantation or conjuration, or some other spurious physical means. This could be done by citing the natural but hidden causal links involved, recognizable only in terms of a knowledge of natural magical effects. Thus, in discrediting the idea that touching itself had an inherent efficacy, de Lancre argued that apparently supportive instances drawn from the unusual behaviour of animals, plants, or metals, or from natural magnetism could be explained in terms of various secret but perfectly natural properties and ‘antipathies’. As examples, he referred to Lcmnius for the bleeding of corpses in the presence of the murderer, and to Fracastoro for the echcncis.[59]

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[55] **Perkins, *Discourse* 20.**

[56] **Thomas Fuller, cited by Feingold, ‘Occult Tradition in the English Universities’, 83.**

[17] **Castafiega, *Tratado,* 309-10.** [51] **Scribonius, *De sagarum natura,* fos. 29-35.**

[5'] **Pierre De Lancre, *L 'incredulite el mescreance du sortilegeplainement convaincue. Ou il est amplement et curieusement traicte, de la verite ou illusion du sortilege, de la fascination, de l'attouchement, du scopelisme, de la magique, des apparitions: et d'une infinited'autres rares et nouveaux subjects* (Paris, 1622), fos. 113-77, esp.**

Finally, any remaining strangeness in the character of real demonic effects could be dissipated by the suggestion that they were in fact no more difficult to accept than the parallel claims made by natural magicians for what Boguet called ‘Nature ... assisted and helped forward by Art’. The speed to which demons accelerated ordinary processes like generation by corruption might (he admitted) invite scepticism. But if alchemists were to be believed, they too could ‘by a turn of the hand create gold, although in the process of Nature this takes a thousand years’. Nor was there any reason to doubt that Satan could make a man appear a wolf, for ‘naturalists’ such as Albertus Magnus, Cardano, and Della Porta had shown how it was possible to effect similar ‘prestigitations’.[60] Similarly, Sebastien Michaëlis compared demonic effects with the marvels described by Mcrcurius Trismcgistus in his *Asclepius* to show that ‘there are many effects ... against and above’ the ordinary causation of things.[61] For Rémy the yardstick offered by natural magic was what it revealed of nature itself rather than of art. When he came to consider the question of the reality of the objects supposedly ejected from the bodies of demoniacs, he cited the natural explanations for this being a true phenomenon given by Lemnius and Paré (in his *Des inonstres et prodiges),* with the following comment: ‘If then Nature, without transgressing the limits which she has imposed upon herself can by her own working either generate or admit such objects, what must we think that the Demons will do.’[62] Nature’s ‘/Enygma’s, Problems and Phaenomcna’s’, including the effects of lightning, the secret properties of herbs, magnetism, the behaviour of the remora, monster births, and the existence of sympathies and antipathies—all of them traditional subjects of natural magic—were likewise paraded by the English apothecary William Drage as grounds for accepting demonic causation as true, even if its precise workings could not be explained.[63]

◆

What these last few examples show is that the idea of natural magic did not always weaken demonology by implying some challenge to theories of demonic agency; on the contrary, it could provide important strengthening points of reference whenever there was a need to contrast or equate this agency with something comparably natural yet occult. But what this whole discussion suggests is that natural magic was, so to speak, epistemologically neutral in the great witchcraft debate. It could certainly be used to supplant demonological accounts of phenomena; but it was also employed

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124-57. In the same way Boguet referred to Della Porta for the real natural effects of the witches’ unguent, and Perkins discussed the well-known natural magical instance of the basilisk or cockatrice, concluding that fascination by breathing or looking alone was either fabulous or the indirect result of natural causes like contagion. For arguments very similar to de Lancre’s, see Leonardo Vairo, *Defascino* (Venice 1589), 122-37 (first pub. 1583).

“ Boguet, *Examen of witches,* 64,146-9, and see also 36-8 for similar appeals regarding miscegenation. Scot, *Discoverie,* 257-9, discusses the same ‘wonderfull experiments’ to make animal heads (appear to) appear on human shoulders, but in a sceptical context.

[41] **Michaëlis, *Discourse ofspirits^^cLDzW^orxc^Tractatus de potestate daemonum* ,194-7 sec also 209.**

[42] **Rémy, *Demono la try,* 139—41.** [41] **Drage, *Daimonomageia,* 27-8.**

to support them. Until its demise, then, it was impossible on natural philosophical grounds alone to make a clear choice between the conventional belief in witchcraft and the demonological scepticism most frequently directed against that belief. The scientific evidence, we might say today, was inconclusive since it could be made to work in either direction. This is why the French legal writer Loys Le Caron (Charondas) was able to concede that there were natural magicians who could do things that seemed as strange as witchcraft without allowing this to affect his belief in the demonic pact; and why Philipp Ludwig Elich was able to cite Agrippa, with obvious admiration, throughout his thoroughly orthodox demonology.[M] As long as Satan was allowed to operate within nature, it was pointless to attempt to explain witchcraft away in terms of natural causes.[65] Even with the demise of natural magic, a sufficient number of its features had by then been absorbed by the ‘new’ natural philosophy, especially (as we shall sec) in England, to continue to make demonic magic, and with it witchcraft, scientifically credible.

All this suggests that the really crucial decision in witchcraft matters—whether to allow devils a presence in the physical world or exclude them from it—had to be initiated not on natural philosophical grounds but on religious and moral ones. It was a matter, said Bekkcr, ‘on which the whole Edifice of our Salvation is grounded’.[66] When devils were excluded, in whole or in part, a whole range of phenomena then became available for natural magical, or, later, ‘new scientific’, explanations to deal with. But it is not easy to sec, other than in the cases of Aristotelian purism, how these explanations themselves could involve this radical step. In the debates we have been tracing, they had a vital but ancillary ‘mopping-up’ role; they explained witchcraft phenomena away once the need to do so had arisen from some other, more subversive, source. Reginald Scot provides the classic instance of this pattern. Certainly, his radical scepticism was made possible by his commitment to the natural magical tradition, in the sense that this was one of its necessary ingredients.[67] *The discoverie of witchcraft* is largely a book that tries to account for all the strange phenomena left stranded, once a religious and moral decision has been taken to remove devils from material activity; and natural magic (together with ‘juggling’, ‘cousening’, ‘popishness’, melancholy, and the rest) offered ways of doing this.[68] But it was not the origin of Scot’s argument, nor sufficient to sustain it; in the history of demonology it cut both ways.[69]

This has not been the usual view of the matter, which has tended to pit ‘science’—

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[44] Loys Le Caron [Charondas], *Responses Ju Jroict franfais confirmees par arrest des cours souveraines de France el rapportees aux lots romaines,* 3rd cdn. (Paris, 1637), 446; *FAich, Daemonomagia,* 169,184,209-10, for some typical examples.

[41] Teall,‘Witchcraft and Calvinism’, 25. “ *Bckker, World bewitch’d,4.*

[47] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 578.

[44] West, *Reginald Scot,* preface, refers correctly to these as Scot’s ‘fall-back positions’.

[49] For the argument that Scot’s conclusions stemmed from his religious, not his scientific, views concerning the relationship between the spiritual and the material worlds, see Leland L. Estes, ‘Reginald Scot and his *Discoverie of Witchcraft:* Religion and Science in the Opposition to the European Witch Craze’, *Church Hist.* 52 (1983), 444-56.

both as natural magic and 'new philosophy'—against demonology in a one-sided contest. And as long as we think of witchcraft theories as somehow intellectually weak and 'unscientific' then their vulnerability in the face of better-grounded versions of nature will command attention. But in early modern Europe, natural and demonic magic were grounded in nature on the same terms. Demonological and more general scientific interests in certain interpretative issues can thus be closely identified with each other. It is to these issues that we can now turn.

16

Prerogative Instances (1)

> I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.
>
> (Psalms 9:1)

> The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event.... The fantastic therefore leads a life full of dangers, and may evaporate at any moment.
>
> (Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic:* zl *Structural Approach to a Literary Genre)*

So far in Part II, we have seen that, considered simply as a causal explanation of phenomena, demonology was as naturalistic as any other branch of the natural philosophy of its time. Conformity to nature is, after all, a criterion with a basis in culture. And in early modern Europe the nature construed by those who dominated traditional physics and medicine was assumed to accommodate demons. Secure on this foundation, witchcraft writers were confident enough to embrace the non-demonic as well as the demonic and to allow’ for a large measure of the impossible and the illusory. I have argued that these were not, in fact, concessions at all but the very constituents of their power to explain. Demonology was for the moment resilient not merely against scepticism concerning matters internal to witchcraft beliefs but even against alternative naturalisms. One of these was eventually to overtake the old physics, for reasons additional to its ability to dispose of the devil. In the end, too, the scope of what counted as natural also changed, leaving preternatural phenomena without an ontological home of their own. Meanwhile, what was natural in witchcraft matters was a matter of loyalty to a paradigm.

As for the interest in a certain type of causation, we have seen that this too was a common property of natural philosophers. Contributors to demonology had to specialize in giving the hidden but none the less real reasons for a particular class of strange and unusual events—the sorts of things the ignorant called ‘miraculous’ or ‘supernatural’ but the learned called ‘occult’. Yet they were simply dealing with a portion of the traditional area of‘preternatural’ or ‘magical’ causation. Whatever the considerable moral complications involved—they are not for the moment at issue—demonic magic was only the analogue of natural magic. In effect, it was natural magic achieved by demons, and so was intelligible to writers on demonology in the way the ‘strange works of Nature’ were intelligible to men like Della Porta and Cardano, Mairhofer and Keckermann—and perhaps Bacon.

All this helps to establish the scientific credentials of demonology and situate it strategically in a field of natural knowledge. It already improves our understanding of its practitioners a good deal to characterize them not just as students of demons and witches, or ideologues of the witch trials, but as philosophers who happened to be concerned with a sub-set of occult causes. Nevertheless, we ought now to be able to take one more step back from the texts and ask whether this was, after all, just a matter of chance. However bizarre its discussions seem today, demonology was, in essence, an exploration of the criteria of intelligibility for a wide range of puzzling events. The question therefore arises whether there was something significant about this intellectual work itself—some special epistemological profit to be derived from the study of the anomalous and eccentric, irrespective of its precise subject-matter or even its concrete findings.

In order to answer this, we will need for the moment to take the broadest possible view of demonology, dissolving it into a yet larger frame of reference. This is partly a matter of concentrating on the formal characteristics of arguments, especially their use of analytical categories, rather than on their conclusions. What now becomes significant is not the opinions arrived at but the kind of sorting out of phenomena that went on along the way—in other words, not so much what witchcraft writers (and others) were saying but what they were doing in saying it. Any discussion of the demonic becomes potentially relevant, whether yielding total willingness to believe, mixed acceptance and rejection, or even total dismissal. Partly, too, we need to consider a much broader range of contexts for demonology—indeed, the contexts suggested by the early modern designation 'philosophical'. Focusing on epistemological motives will also allow us to sever the connection between demonology and witchcraft prosecutions, with its narrowing effect on our understanding of meanings, and embrace a great range and variety of discussions where demons and witches were certainly of interest but witch-hunting was not. Why, then, this particular preoccupation with the preternatural? Did interpreting these perverse phenomena yield philosophical gains unobtainable from the more mundane kinds? And could this help to account for the vogue for demonology and the currency of the witchcraft debate in early modern Europe?

◆ * *

It was Francis Bacon who gave not only one of the most effective fresh defences of the study of preternature but, by placing it at the centre of his *Instauratio magna,* one of the most influential as well. At the same time, his discussion signals a crucial stage in the absorption of natural marvels by a more expansive *scientia naturalis,* a shift in the balance of categories that underlies many of the changes in early modem scientific thought. The new natural philosophy, he urged in *De augments scientiarum,* must be built on a new natural history, and this should reflect the various conditions ('regimens') in which all natural events occurred.[1] Most were of a routine kind, free from all hindrance or interruption; for example, the movements of the heavens, or the reproduction of animal and vegetable species. Instances of this sort were the subject of ‘History of Generations’. Then there were the human constraints placed on nature by art and technique. Bacon thought this was essentially the regimen of experiment and he called the record of it ‘History of Nature Wrought, or Mechanical’. But between these two predictable categories he added ‘History of Pretergenerations’. This was to be an account of changes that were neither routine nor artificial, but resulted when, in exceptional circumstances, nature was ‘driven out of her ordinary course by the perverseness, insolence, and frowardness of matter’ itself. These were ‘errors’, ‘wanderings’, or ‘digressions’ from the norm; Bacon called them ‘the Heteroclites or Irregulars of nature’ and, again, ‘singular instances *{instantiae monadicaef.* He complained that the existing literature of mirabilaries would not fulfil the role of this third form of natural history because it was merely full of fables, ‘idle secrets’, and the sympathies and antipathies of magic. Nevertheless, reform, not abolition, was (as often) his aim. There is not much doubt that a Baconian *historia naturae errantis* would have drawn on traditional histories of marvels and prodigies—literally, the ‘monsters’ of the natural world—in the same way as his *Sylva sylvarum* drew on conventional natural magic.

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[1] The key passages are *De augmentis scientiarum, Works,* iv. 294-6 (Latin version, i. 496-8), and *Advancement of Learning, Works,* iii. 330-2; sec also *Parasene ad historiam naturalem et 'exfierimentalem, Works,* iv. 253-7 (Latin, i. 395-8).

Bacon’s proposal for a ‘History of Preternature’ has often been cited in the context of prodigy literature but its relevance (with that of the *Instauratio magna* in general) for demonology has gone unnoticed. He certainly thought of it as a major desideratum and we shall see that it had a marked influence on the early activities of the Royal Society. This ensured that the marvellous remained a central category of investigation during some of the most formative decades of the new science.[2] [3] Bacon’s justification was partly technological; he claimed that the rarities of nature would soon lead scholars to rarities of art. But it was also epistemological. Singularities and aberrations in nature were not merely correctives to the partiality of generalizations built on commonplace examples; as deviations from the norm they were especially revealing of nature’s ordinary forms and processes.

It was indeed precisely because they were epistemologically crucial that Bacon developed these ideas again when he came to set out the logical steps of the *Novum organum* itself. The laborious investigations of true induction had somehow to be sharpened and quickened by epistemological dodges—ministrations that would ‘help and set right the understanding and senses’ and expedite practice? These were the tables of ‘Prerogative Instances’, twenty-seven in all, listing areas of experimental enquiry especially privileged by their unusual capacity to disclose natural processes and yield decisive information. Bacon spoke of these as ‘excelling’ common instances and of the urgent need to study many of them ‘without waiting for the particular investigation of natures’? Amongst them was, again, the pretergenerational category proper, that is to say, *Instantias Monadicas,* ‘which I also call *Irregular QT Heteroclite* together with the closely allied category *Instantias Deviantes** ‘that is,

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[2] Thorndike, *History of Magic,* vii. 63-88, in a hostile chapter on Bacon, says that his ‘emphasis upon monsters and errors and freaks of nature was to remain characteristic of the science of the rest of the century’ (p. 70).

[3] Bacon, *Novum organum. Works,* iv. 24.

[4] Ibid. 246-7.

errors, vagaries and prodigies of nature wherein nature deviates and turns aside from her ordinary course'. The first were prodigious individuals, the second prodigious species: 'all prodigies and monstrous births of nature; ... everything ... that is in nature new, rare, and unusual'.[5]

Bacon's examples and his criticisms of previous thinking on preternatural subjects indicate that we are dealing in both the *De augments scientiarum* and the *Novum organtitn* with an evaluation on grounds of second-order utility of the scientific interests surveyed above in Chapter 14. Among the causes of nature's digressions were as yet unknown 'hidden properties'; one of the most notable 'singular instances' was magnetism; natural magic and alchemy yielded many examples of 'deviation', once the elements of fable were removed. In a clear reference to the deficiences of the natural magical tradition, Bacon insisted that the logic of prerogative instances would allow the new scientist to take the investigation of hidden properties and qualities beyond the point where, normally, their strange effects were consigned to the category of miracle, and enquiry ceased. 'Now', he complained, 'the thoughts of men go no further than to pronounce such things the secrets and mighty works of nature, things as it were causeless, and exceptions to general rules.' A natural philosophy that allowed for nature's most striking effects only as inexplicable anomalies was evidently unsatisfactory; it was 'depraved by custom and the common course of things'. What (in Bacon's view) made preternatural instances epistemologically so potent was the way they forced natural philosophers to become aware of the limitations of their explanatory paradigms. Challenged by apparent vagaries, it was their duty to adjust their explanations until the strangeness disappeared. Thomas Kuhn has described this as the process whereby the anomalous becomes the expected; Bacon spoke likewise of reducing and comprehending the preternatural 'under some Form or fixed law'. In his view, science would never advance until it deliberately confronted the most obtuse phenomena.

At this point, we are very close to the heart of Bacon's scientific thought and the immensely influential Baconian tradition in general. But we are also close to witchcraft. Given the proximities between errant nature and demonology, we might almost have expected even Bacon to draw on the latter for more examples of singular instances. When he does do this the impact is still startling:

> Neither am I of opinion in this history of marvels, that superstitious narratives of sorceries, witchcrafts, charms, dreams, divinations, and the like, where there is an assurance and clear evidence of the fact, should be altogether excluded. For it is not yet known in what cases, and how far, effects attributed to superstition participate of natural causes; and therefore howsoever the use and practice of such arts is to be condemned, yet from the speculation and consideration of them (if they be diligently unravelled) a useful light may be gained, not only for the true judgement of the ofTenccs of persons charged with such practices, but likewise for the further disclosing of the secrets of nature.[6]

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[5] **Bacon, *Novum organum, Works.* 168-9 (Latin, i. 281-3).**

[6] **Bacon, *De augments scientiarum. Works,* iv. 296; cf. *Advancement of Learning. Works,* iii. 331**

'... *for* the further disclosing of the secrets of nature'. Nothing suggests the epistemological potential of early modern demonology better than this phrase. Witchcraft narratives, Bacon was saying, were evidence in the legal sense but also in the empirical sense. What they contained was not only the moral deviations of men and women but the physical deviations of nature. Reduced to considerations of cause, they showed 'instances of exception to general kinds' and therefore helped the vital processes of induction. Not only were they fit subjects for natural philosophy (my claim throughout these chapters); they were even thought to be crucial to its progress.

This idea had its significance for Bacon's own programme, but it also helps us to understand the role of European demonology in the wider setting. For here, as elsewhere in his writing, Bacon was pursuing intimations—making explicit the scientific tastes implied by the widespread contemporary concern for the unusual and the occult in nature. His designation of demonology as a 'prerogative instance' may therefore be allowed to stand for a much broader community of interest. Demonology appealed as a subject for science precisely because, in his terms, its very intractability made it epistemologically demanding. This is because it raised empirical and conceptual issues that were fundamental to all systematic investigation but were laid bare in an especially revealing manner by the very waywardness of the phenomena it dealt with and the struggle to understand them. In these Baconian senses, demonology was a 'prerogative instance' not only for the *Instauratio niagna* but for early modern science as a whole.

* * *

I do not want to suggest that writers on witchcraft had Bacon's texts at their elbows and that they were consciously setting out to fulfil his precise recommendations (although in the case of Joseph Glanvill and one or two others this would not be an implausible claim). Nor was theorizing about witchcraft just a pretext for working out epistemological problems. Nevertheless, however conscious witchcraft authors were of this, epistemological problems were getting worked out in what they wrote; and at a time in the history of science when it was especially urgent that they should be. Otherwise, it seems difficult to account either for the considerable concern shown for the subject of demonology by natural philosophers who—like Glanvill—obviously had no interest in the prosecution of witches, or the extent to which demonology intersected with contemporary treatments of the other areas of preternature mentioned by Bacon. There was a time when historians of science were able to dismiss the early modern interest in all such phenomena as mere intellectual curiosity and pseudo-science—the product of a dubious taste for the bizarre. But recent demonstrations of the sheer extent of the commitment to these subjects, and of their role in natural philsophical enquiry at the time, have led to a major reappraisal of them. With Bacon's help, therefore, it should be possible to claim for demonology the kind of intellectual role that has recently been suggested for those areas of natural philosophical enquiry with which it had its closest epistemological ties.

Nor is it important that Bacon should eventually have arrived at the *same* interpretation of witchcraft narratives as the witchcraft specialists. His principle that extraordinary events were worth more attention than ordinary ones had a formal truth, whether it was decided that they were all natural or all demonic. On the other hand', if, as I have argued, the 'natural' and the 'demonic' were not yet alternative categories of explanation, this was not in any ease the choice that had to be made. This means that the real intellectual distance between a figure like Bacon and the world of demonology may not after all be as great as might be assumed. It is true that in both the *De augment isscientiarum* and the *Novum organuni* he talked as though it was a personified nature itself that erred, not a nature acted on by demonic forces. In the *Sylva sylvarum* he also suggested that it was popular credulity that was responsible for the attribution of purely natural (i.c. non-demonic) operations to some sort of efficacy in witchcraft. An example, probably Della Porta's, was the way the hallucinogenic effects of the 'opiate and soporiferous' qualities of magical ointments were mistaken for the supposedly real transvcctions and metamorphoses that appeared in witches' confessions.[7] Above all, Bacon insisted that the only phenomena that were non-natural were true miracles.

It is scarcely surprising that these views have been associated with outright naturalism and, therefore, with philosophical indifference to the problems raised by witchcraft beliefs. Yet all of them are found in the writings of the witchcraft authors themselves—Boguet, for example, talked in the same fashion about hallucinogens—and the second and third were virtually presuppositions of their enquiry. The only really contentious issue between Bacon and Boguet would have been the relative importance of demonically and non-demonically caused events. And here even Bacon allowed for the first when he acknowledged that 'the experiments of witchcraft are no clear proofs [i.c. of the power of the imagination on other bodies]; for that they may be by a tacit operation of malign spirits.'[8] Once again, we are faced with the artificiality of bringing the modern notion that there is a difference in kind between the 'scientific' and the 'occult' to what were simply differences in emphasis between varying conceptions of nature.

More striking still is Bacon's phrase 'the experiments of witchcraft'. It seems that, along with all the other evidences of the preternatural—the marvels and prodigies, the secrets and recipes, on which so much contemporary attention was lavished—the study of witchcraft had, by the early seventeenth century, come to provide those special opportunities for inspecting and adjusting scientific assumptions from which the later notion of the experiment emerged. In the scholastic notion of experience, singularities and deviations of nature, far from affording privileged insight, were actually misleading, precisely because they transgressed nature's ordinary processes. 'If the natural philosopher', Peter Dear has written, 'were to interfere with a natural process—that is, set up contrived situations—he would be thwarting nature, and its processes would therefore remain unknown? One of the new demands made of experience during the seventeenth century was that of legitimating the specific, even contrived natural event as ‘the primary empirical component of natural philosophy’.[9] Bacon was thus able to advocate the evidential merit of wayward phenomena, without suggesting that their ‘monstrosity’ was anything more than an indication that the ordinary course of nature might be different from what had previously been supposed. The way we might put this today would be to say that the subject of witchcraft had become particularly rich in thought-experiments; experimenting with it in any practical way was not advisable, whereas all manner of insights might be gained by imagining what would have to follow for such a strange phenomenon to be true and what needed to be the case for it to be false. The way another contemporary enthusiast expressed the value of studying natural wonders was much the same; he collected and published them, he said,

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[7] Bacon, *Sylva sylvarum^ Works,* ii. 642, see also 664.

[1] Ibid. 658. For an 'experiment solitary touching maleficiating', sec ibid. 634.

> to rouze and awaken the Reason of Men asleep, into a Thinking and Philosophical Temper; that if possible, when they will wink and sleep, and scorn to spend a serious Thought upon the Common Scheme of the World, they may startle at Extraordinaries, and wind up their Reasons a little higher, upon the sight of Wonders.[10]

To explain this, however, we have to look beyond Bacon’s confident pursuit of *natura errans*; in isolation, it is not the best guide to the epistemological predicaments of his generation. It belies the sense of turmoil that emerges from so much of the scientific activity of the time. The very perception of deviations in nature depended, by definition, on a degree of consensus regarding what could ordinarily be expected to happen and how to explain it. Yet consensus on these basic issues was conspicuously lacking, within as well as across the various subject areas. No scientific community is immune from internal dispute and even breakdown in its normal-scientific engagements. But in early modern Europe both the extent of controversy and the importance of the controverted issues were extraordinary. There was, indeed, no ‘scientific community’ but a Babel of competing sects and voices. One historian of science speaks of the sixteenth century as ‘a century of confusion’; another of ‘conceptual chaos’ in the era that followed.[11] It seems, then, that basic scientific assumptions were themselves in disarray.

The sense of uncertainty is so strong that one is tempted (resorting to an old historiographical trope) to think of the period as one of radical epistemological instability, situated between eras when natural philosophy, if never monolithic, rested at least on dominating conceptual orthodoxies.[12] One of these, inherited from the past, continued to make adequate sense of demonic activity for those with a largely traditional view of the world and its workings—this, at least, is what the previous chapters in this sequence have tried to show. But it was also challenged by divergent and competing conceptual schemes. Whatever the intellectual and professional commitments of individual writers on demonology, their field, and many others like it, became disputed epistemological terrain—pending the re-establishment of the new broad consensus that historians call 'modern science'. This did not spell immediate or sudden disaster. On the contrary—a consequence of the resulting instability was that reconsidering the validity of marvellous phenomena of every kind, together with the criteria for understanding them, became a scientific priority. As was said at an earlier stage, open intellectual competition made subjects like demonology especially appealing; they seemed more and more to hover uncertainly along the edges of categories and, thus, to offer insight into categorization itself. This may not be exactly what Bacon had in mind when he talked of 'prerogative instances' but it is close enough for the notion to retain its value. I continue, therefore, to borrow his terminology in what follows.

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[9] The two quotations are from Peter Dear, ‘Miracles, Experiments, and the Ordinary Course of Nature’, 663-83 (quotation at 681), which also explores the developing evidential status of the singular experimental event and relates this (in the case of England) to the Protestant doctrine of the cessation of miracles; and id., ‘Jesuit Mathematical Science and the Reconstitution of Experience in the Early Seventeenth Century’, *Studies in Hist, and Philosophy of Science,* 18 (1987), 133-75 (quotation at 134).

[10] Turner, *Compleat history of the most remarkable providences,* preface to pt. 2; Turner’s examples from demonism and witchcraft are in pt. 1 (4 paginations), 16-34^2,56-60^2,120-52^3,1—6^4,66^4;cf. John Spencer, *A discourse concerning prodigies* (Cambridge, 1663), 104, for explicit support for Bacon on this point.

[11] A. Rupert Hall, *The Revolution in Science 1500-1750* (London, 1983), 73; MacDonald Ross, ‘Occultism and Philosophy’, 100.

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[12] As do, for example, Hunter, *John Aubrey,* 21; C. B. Schmitt, 'Recent Trends in the Study of Medieval and Renaissance Science', in Pietro Corsi and Paul Wcindling (eds.), *Information Sources in the History of Science and Medicine* (London, 1983), 226-8.

17

Prerogative Instances (2)

> For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.
>
> (Luke 8:17)

> Exploding like some scandal or absurdity against a background of regularity and familiarity, the singular constitutes a problem. It promotes the search for a solution but does not provide one. Aberrations do not themselves shed light, nor do they lay nature bare, but they do bring into focus, as it were, the object on which the light ought to be concentrated. The singular plays its epistemological role not by offering itself as the basis of generalization, but by forcing a reappraisal of an earlier generality in terms of that which it singularizes.
>
> (Georges Canguilhem, *Etudes d'histoire et de philosophic des sciences)*

SOME of the conditions that made for confusion are too well known to need more than brief summary. Mature disciplines with well-established research fields, like astronomy, dynamics, and medicine, went through the fundamental upheaval associated with classic scientific 'revolutions'. The bewildering variety of medical opinions—Galenisl, Paracclsian (of all shades), iatrochemical, mechanistic—was especially marked. In other areas, like physical optics and the study of electricity, the absence of any dominating paradigm made, in any case, for a freer play of competing views. Some individual sciences fought, at one stage or another, for their very survival; for example, astrology, alchemy, mathematics, and natural magic. Others, like chemistry and botany, achieved a genuine disciplinary identity of their own. The intellectual rivalry could be violent and deeply rooted. Between the chemical philosophy of the Paracelsian Oswald Croll and the 'chemical didactic' of his critic Andreas Libavius, for example, there was 'a fundamental clash of ideologies which ran much deeper than the status and provenance of chemistry'.[1] Scientific thought on specific topics became fragmented or polarized. Element theory was 'in a state of flux' towards the end of the sixteenth century;[2] action by contact vied with action at a distance in views about physical causation;[3] there was a 'prolonged state of confusion' in theories about the corruptibility or incorruptibility of the celestial regions;[4]

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[1] Owen Hanna way, *The Chemists and the Word: The Didactic Origins of Chemistry* (Baltimore, 1975), p. xi and *passim.*

[2] Debus, *Man and Nature*, 25.

[1] Mary B. Hesse, *Forces and Fields: The Concept of Action at a Distance in the History of Physics* (London, 1961), 74-156.

[4] Grant, 'Were there Significant Differences between Medieval and Early Modern Scholastic Natural Philosophy?', 13.

Galenic medical practice cured by contraries while Paracelsian remedies were applied according to the principle ‘like cures like’;[5] on the subject of magnetism in the first half of the seventeenth century, there was ‘a welter of very disparate views’;[6] [7] later, ‘ “fermentation” could be understood in a variety of ways, from Van Helmont’s mysticism to the purely mechanistic corpuscularianism pioneered by the Oxford scientists of the Interregnum.” Everywhere there were dramatic differences of substance in accounts of natural reality, and no clear indication, in many cases until late in the seventeenth century or beyond, which of them should be regarded as orthodox. One decade—the 1620s—saw open competition across Europe; during another—the 1640s—the reception of new’ ideas in English science and medicine produced a theoretical free-for-all of Feyerabendian proportions.[8] *

It is possible to think of these divergences in terms of disagreements over the first principles of natural philosophical explanation—that is to say, at the level where individual explanations were themselves grounded in preferred cosmologies. The major alternatives usually identified by historians of science have been the three conceptual schemes associated with Aristotelian neo-scholasticism, ‘Hermeticism’ with its ally Paracelsianism, and the mechanical philosophy. In each case, a cluster of philosophical ideas dictated what entities existed in nature, how' natural change was caused, and how these matters could be investigated by natural philosophers. In effect, there were first two, then three versions of nature available in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the controversies and struggles in the natural philosophy of the period stemmed from their philosophical incommensurability.’ Although there is something to commend this view, the fact that it is still an oversimplification is shown by the difficulty in assigning individual scholars—the much-debated case of Newton being only one among many—to individual philosophies. How much did William Gilbert owe to natural magic;[10] were Fludd and Kepler, Della Porta and Bacon, Mersenne and Van Helmont, alike as well as unlike in their ideas;*[1] can Dee’s eclectic and fluctuating thought be ascribed to any one intellectual

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[5] See above, Ch. 4.

‘ Piero E. Ariotti, ‘Benedetto Castelli’s *Discount on the Loadstone* (1639-1640): The Origin of the Notion of Elementary Magnets Similarly Aligned’, *Annals of Science*. 38 (1981), 126, who then summarizes many of them (126-32).

[7] Hunter, *John Aubrey*, 138.

• G. A. J. Rogers,‘The Basis of Belief: Philosophy, Science and Religion in 17th-Century England’, *Hist. European Ideas*, 6 (1985), 27 (referring to Paul Feyerabend’s ‘anything goes’ principle)

’ frslea, *Witch Hunting*, *W*, speaks of these ‘cosmologies’ in a bitter ‘three-cornered contest’; cf. Hugh Kearney, *Science and Change 1500-1700* (London, 1971), 22-48 and *passim*; Peter M. Heimann, The Scientific Revolutions m Peter Burke (ed.) *Neu, Cambridge Modem History, xiii. Companion Volume* (Cambridge, 1979), 250-5 (but stressing the ‘confused intellectual complexion’ of the science of the period). For a more recent version see Margaret J. Osler, ‘The Intellectual Sources of Robert Boyle’s Ph-lowphy of Nature: Gassendi s Voluntarism and Boyle’s Physico-Theological Project’, in Richard Kr , Richa d Ashcraft and Perez Za (eds.) Ph,lOSOl,hy Scien *Religion in England 1640-1700* (C^bddge 1992M83’

•’ Easlea’, *Witch Hunting*, 90-2.

" Debus,‘ChOTjwlDebMwofthe Seventeenth Century’, in Righini Bonelli and Shea (eds.),/taKW»i *Experiment, and Mysticism*, 26-9; cf. d., *The Chemical Philosophy: Paracelsian Science and Medicine in the* tradition?[12] These, and questions like them, have become common in the literature and reflect the eclecticism that often prevailed in scientific circles at the time. Even the philosophies themselves were by no means discontinuous. In some respects, the *spirit us mundi* of Ficino and his Neoplatonist followers distributed rarified matter as mechanistically as the ‘aether’ of the mechanists. A shared language of‘right reason’ meant that the mechanical universe ‘was not a totally different world from that of its rivals’.[13] Systems of explanation were, accordingly, ‘mixed’ and ‘capacious’.[14] Above all, occult causation was an ingredient of all three cosmologies and not just of the one that gave natural magic the most favourable attention. We have already seen it in its Aristotelian guise, and we will eventually find it answering some of the difficulties of those who wished to reduce all natural change to matter in motion. This last example, in particular, has led recent scholars to explain the ferment in early modern natural philosophy in terms not so much of the competition between different models as of their mingling.[15]

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In these circumstances, it seems best to turn from the confusion of schools to the confusion of categories. Historians now find it difficult to place authors and their books; but contemporaries found it difficult to place things. Early modern natural philosophy—and, indeed, natural knowledge of the broader, non-specialist kind—suffered from what I earlier called ‘frontier’ problems, problems concerning the boundaries between different types of phenomena and, consequently, the allocation of individual occurrences to any particular type. It suffered, that is to say, from all the uncertainties associated with a revolutionary period in science, but, in particular, it experienced what W. von Leyden once called a ‘categorial revolution’.[16] This, too, stemmed from the uncertainties created by competing accounts of nature. But it can

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Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (2 vols.; New York, 1977), i. 256-60; Robert S. Westman, ‘Nature, Art, and Psyche: Jung, Pauli, and the Kepler-Fludd Polemic’, in Vickers (ed.), *Occult and Scientific Mentalities,* 177-229; Debus, ‘Medico-Chemical World’, 96-9.

[12] Clulcc, *John Dee *s Natural Philosophy*, 1-18,232.

[”] Ix)tte Mulligan, ‘ “Reason”, “Right Reason”, and “Revelation” in Mid-Seventeenth-Century England’, in Vickers (ed.), *Occult and Scientific Mentalities,* 397.

[14] Hunter,JoAn *Aubrey, 23.*

[B] See MacDonald Ross, ‘Occultism and Philosophy’, 98-100: Schaflcr, ‘Occultism and Reason’, 117-43; Keith Hutchison, ‘What Happened to Occult Qualities in the Scientific Revolution?’ *Isis,* 73 (1982), 233-54; Simon Schaflcr, ‘Godly Men and iMcchanical Philosophers: Souls and Spirits in Restoration Natural Philosophy’, *Science in Context,* 1 (1987), 65; Millen, ‘Manifestation of Occult Qualities’. For the ‘conceptual evasiveness’ of Hermeticism, see the contributions to Merkel and Debus (eds.), *Hermeticism and the Renaissance,* and introduction, 8-9. On the other hand, there is a vigorous attempt to separate the experimental (scientific) from the occult (magical) tradition, in Brian Vickers, ‘Analogy versus Identity: The Rejection of Occult Symbolism, 1580-1680’, in id. (ed.), *Occult and Scientific Mentalities,* 95-163; cf. id., ‘Kritische Reaktionen auf die okkulten Wissenschaften in der Renaissance’, in Jean-Francois Bcrgier (ed.), *Zwischen IVahn, Glaube und Wissenschaft* (Zurich, 1988), 167-239; id., ‘On the Goal of the Occult Sciences in the Renaissance’, in Georg Kauflmann (ed.), *Die Renaissance im Blick der Nationen Europas* (Wiesbaden, 1991), 51-93.

[14] W. von Leyden, *Seventeenth-Century Metaphysics* (London, 1968), 4-5: ‘The meaning of this phrase is that philosophical systems differ from one another not so much in virtue of any new observations or more accurate beliefs about the world, or even in a better logic or a stricter internal consistency, as in the

also be traced to the instability, partly inherent, and partly occasioned by new pressures, of the broad divisions between types of phenomena that were inherited from the past. In the late medieval system of nature (we recall) events were either natural, supernatural, or preternatural. Natural events occurred as the entirely regular, normal, uninterrupted consequences of the laws of nature, and supernatural ones as manifestations of the divine will acting above nature altogether. Preternatural events were within nature but were abnormal and deviant, and thus not part *o£scieitli(ry* they were cither exotic but spontaneous products of the wonderful properties of natural things themselves, or they occurred when human or demonic agents practised with these properties to create artificial marvels. In the case of human agents, this was done by *magia naturalis,* and in the case of demons by *magia daemonica.* Only morality separated these two 'magical' technologies, not ontology or epistemology. In fact, common to all preternatural things was an element of unintelligibility—they were hidden or occult things, experienced but not explicable, or known only to adepts but not generally understood.

As long as these three causal categories remained fairly fixed, the allocation of phenomena might be disputed but not prove impossible. But given its definition, the category of preternature was sure to become unstable in early modern conditions. On the one side, it was bounded by true miracles, whose very identity was made increasingly uncertain by unprecedented theological dispute, rivalry between the churches, and the rewriting of ecclesiastical history. However clear in theory, the difference between mere wonders and real miracles became more and more difficult to maintain in particular cases as competing interests fought for the possession or elimination of these vital ideological resources. The single most important attempt to reallocate religious effects was made by the Protestant reformers, who argued that miracles had ceased after the days of the early church and denounced Catholic versions as specious.[17] Here was an enormous new field of happenings that either had to be reduced to real but preternatural causation or explained away as delusory or fraudulent—and, indeed, defended from these reallocations. But Protestant beliefs themselves were not invulnerable to doubt on similar grounds, replacing the miracle, as they did, with divine interventions—prodigies, portents, providences, and so on—of their own choosing.[18] Catholics too felt the need to verify by more exacting standards the reality of their own supernaturalisms. 'The status of the marvelous', it has been said, 'is problematic in any religion', but particularly in the monotheistic ones.[19] In early modern Europe, all such religious effects became the focus of fresh and often intense argument about the identification and classification of phenomena.

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way in which they revise the basic assumptions or categories of thought in terms of which aspects of reality arc conceived and classified.' I take this to include the revision of specifically *causal* categories on which this chapter concentrates.

” D. P. Walker, 'The Cessation of Miracles', in Merkel and Debus (cds.), *Uermeticism and the Renaissance,* 111-24.

[11] See below Part III, and for a striking individual example, R. W. Scribner, 'Incombustible Luther: The Image of the Reformer in Early Modern Germany', *Past and Present,* 110 (1986) 38-68

” Jacques Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination,* trans. Arthur Goldhammer (London 1988) 31

The naturalizing ambitions of philosophers also vied with theological orthodoxy. The most notorious example here is Pietro Pomponazzi, who in the context of defending Peripatetic purism, and with several disclaimers, offered what he believed were natural accounts of the efficacy of prayer, the healing properties of relics, prophetic illumination, most miracles, and even the origin of Christianity itself (not to mention every other phenomenon in the lower world). Pomponazzi insisted that many of the effects attributed to religious agents only had the status of marvels and miracles because their real efficacy lay in occult properties and celestial influences that were mostly unknown. We can speak here too, then, of pressure and, indeed, encroachment by the category of preternature on territory previously occupied by the miraculous. Pomponazzi naturally declined to force an open confrontation but he became famous throughout Europe as the reducer of religion to nature—the equivalent of Machiavelli, as it were, in natural philosophy. He had a few equally extremist imitators—for example, Lucilio Vanini—but is chiefly important as one of the best-known bench-marks of contemporary epistemological debate.[20]

Simultaneously, preternature was itself being overhauled from behind by its predatory neighbour on the other flank. On this side, it was marked off from ordinary nature by decisions concerning what was regular or irregular, what was manifest or occult, science or not-science. And consensus on these matters became less and less easy to achieve and enforce as the pace of scientific controversy quickened and the natural philosophical community became itself divided. After all, it is not ‘whiggish’ to recognize that the very concept of something preternatural was contingent on a kind of ignorance; the greater the familiarity with natural marvels and artificial contrivances, the more likely it was that unusual things would come to seem ordinary. It was a commonplace at the time that the attribution of marvels was a social and cultural matter; that the ‘vulgar’ and ‘ignorant’ were very likely to assign what they found strange to the wrong causal category. ‘Everything that scientists do in imitating nature or helping it with art’, complained Tommaso Campanella in 1604, ‘is called magical work ... For technology is always called magic until it is understood, but after a while it becomes ordinary science.’[21] Technology had indeed always been closely associated with magic but not just out of ‘vulgar’ prejudice. The link was made ‘at every layer of medieval thought’,[22] especially since what was natural (properly-so-called) for Aristotelians excluded the mechanical and the artificial. In early modern depictions of natural magic too, the goal of practical application was invariably uppermost, and here the process of‘naturalization’ described by Campanella was most evident. As European society experienced new and more embracing forms of technology, so assumptions about its epistemological foundation and its place in the scheme of knowledge of nature were bound to change—along with judgements of a more moral kind concerning the social utility of collaborative labour and the worth of the mechanical arts. Individual arts, as well as the feats of machines in general, continued to be spoken of as wonders, even by those who took them entirely for granted. But the cultural conditions that had once made them preternatural disappeared.[23]

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[20] Pomponazzi, *De naturalium ejjectuum causis,passim;* Easlea, *Witch Hunting,* 94-6.

[21] Campanella cited by Eamon,‘Technology as Magic’, 171. Further examples in Kocher, *Science and Religion,* 135-6.

[22] Eamon, ‘Technology as Magic’, 195 and^wm on this theme.

The same was true of the more theoretical aspects of medieval and early modern magic. We saw in an earlier chapter how the natural magical literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries moved gradually away from Aristotelian purism regarding the unintelligibility of occult causes and occult phenomena. Natural magic itself was invariably defined in terms of its capacity to evoke wonder in those who remained ignorant of its subject-matter—but not, by implication, in those who grasped its findings. As we also saw, the subjects it covered were routinely included in the teaching curriculum by the Aristotelian natural philosophers, who still largely dominated academic physics. In some contexts, preternatural knowledge continued to be regarded as the private possession of adepts, but this was not generally the case and the esoterism involved was increasingly disparaged. In short, preternature was differentiated in such a way as to bring about its own deconstruction—and by more intellectual exertion, not less.

Finally, it was threatened from the direction of ordinary science by fundamental changes in concepts of natural law, changes which in any case made natural philosophers less and less tolerant of aberration in principle and turned irregularities (in Eamon Duffy's memorable phrase) into 'litter on the face of God's tidy creation'.[24] It was not just that the strangeness went out of deviant phenomena, but that deviance itself gave way to inexorability as a function of explanation. This was not just preternature's loss; it bequeathed that sense of wonder at nature's workings that had helped to define it to the 'new philosophy'. Nature, wrote Joseph Glanvill, was 'a constant Prodigy'.[25]

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For all these reasons, supernatural explanations were challenged by preternatural, and preternatural by natural alternatives. Eventually, explanation became monolithic; all the happenings relevant to scientists became, in principle, natural, and what remained of the miraculous became irrelevant. In the mean time, distinctions that had hitherto been crucial to the philosophical and cultural distribution of phenomena were blurred or disappeared. However, none of this happened without residue. *Miracula* might become *tnira,* and *natura errant* might become *natura current,* but unusual phenomena could also be rejected as unreal; indeed, they had to be if they did not meet the new categorial and epistemological demands.

In complement, then, to these major reallocations, and a further reason for the instability of causal categories in the early modern period, was the greatly increased attention given to the role of error and illusion in human knowledge. The deception of the senses and the fallibility of the mind presented such a challenge to early modern thinkers that the leading historian of scepticism has spoken of them as being in the throes of a 'crisis of Pyrrhonism'.[26] The revival of Greek sceptical thought, especially after the publication of the works of Sextus Empiricus in the 1560s, helped to focus theological problems concerning the grounds of belief but also to sustain a variety of fideistic solutions to them—as well as providing highly usable ammunition for religious polemic. In humanistic circles, the damage to confidence was much greater, since the irredeemably divided character of learned opinion was now given a proper theoretical foundation. But it was above all the world of science and philosophy that experienced the most severe sceptical crisis and the resolution most significant for future developments. The fundamental threat to certainty (in the Aristotelian sense) posed by the combination of empirical and rational failings could not eventually be overcome, only mitigated by the resort to probabilistic criteria. These were the issues that confronted men like Francisco Sanchez, Montaigne, Bacon, Mersenne, Gassendi, and Descartes.

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[23] **Paolo Rossi, *Philosophy, Technology, and the Arts in the Early Modern Era,* trans. Salvator Attanasio, ed. Benjamin Nelson (London, 1970); Wayne Shumaker, 'Accounts of Marvelous Machines in the Renaissance', *Thought,* 51 (1976), 255-70.**

[24] **Eamon Duffy, 'Valentine Greatrakes, the Irish Stroker: Miracle, Science, and Orthodoxy in Restoration England', in Keith Robbins (ed.), *Religion and Humanism* (Oxford, 1981), 252**

[25] **Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphalus,* 66.**

While the *crise pyrrhonienne* deepened awareness of epistemological uncertainty and made it philosophically respectable to doubt, the systematic sceptical techniques of the Greeks were not, of course, directed solely at preternatural phenomena and knowledge. Nevertheless, they coincided at many points with questions about the reliability of sense perception that had routinely been applied to the unusual and the marvellous. The principle that what the senses transmitted was relative to the conditions in which they functioned was widely accepted in this context. It was obvious that perceptual accuracy could be disturbed by the passions and the imagination, as well as by a whole range of bodily ailments. Visions, hallucinations, and dreams were the subject of constant discussion in medical literature. The effects of melancholy, in particular, captured the interest of so many scholars in so many fields that they rank as one of the most talked-of topics of the age. Here, delusion was itself marvellous; what happened to melancholics was nothing if not preternatural. But in its attribution to a physical condition lay the seeds of its naturalization, as well as its location in unreality. It was the case of all marvels that if they could be shown to rest on perceptual mistakes, or the power of the imagination, or some other natural disorder, they were effectively explained away.

An important early treatment was *De causis mirabilium* by the fourteenth-century scholastic natural philosopher Nicole Oresme. Essentially, his case was that, setting aside the possibility of divine and demonic intrusions, most apparently marvellous effects were the products of sensory malfunction.[27] A few were real, but ordinarily natural and simply unrecognized, and the rest were illusory—even if their illusoriness could itself be traced to natural causes. In the hands of later adapters and editors, Orcsme became the author of a reconstituted treatise devoted largely to the errors of the five senses, the variable effects on perception of the nutritive and generative faculties, and the distorting influence of language and individual mentality. Deceptibility on this scale was perhaps rare outside the pages of the philosophical sceptics, but piecemeal deployment of these notions became very common. A good example of more than routine application by someone who was well aware of the Pyrrhonist parallels is the Angers lawyer Pierre Lc Loyer's *Qiiatre livres des spectres* (1586). Devoted to a classic subject from the literature of marvels, it marshals virtually the entire range of sixteenth-century reservations about accepting the evidence of the senses or the decisions of reason in cases of apparently aberrant phenomena. In fact, Le Loyer was able to surmount these doubts and accept the reality of ghosts. For this reason, his discussion exemplifies the way acceptance and rejection had become—in epistemological terms, at least—equally plausible alternatives. Those preternatural events that could not eventually be given real natural causes, as could comets, the tides, magnetism, and indeed the very physical and mental illnesses that disturbed perception and judgement, could now just as readily be called false.[28]

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[26] In what follows, I depend on Popkin, *History of Scepticism, passim,* esp. 53-4.

[27] Text and full commentary in [Oresme], *Nicole Oresme and the Marvels of Nature: A Study of His De Causis Mirabilium with Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary,* ed. Bert Hansen (Toronto, 1985); details of the later transmission of this text are in Lynn Thorndike, 'Coelestinus's Summary of Nicolas

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One way to bring together this array of changes from a position of relative stability to one of confusion in the application of categories to phenomena might be to ask, simply, how hypothetically well-informed inhabitants of early modern Europe were expected to make sense of some typically marvellous happenings. Faced by prodigious appearances in the skies, were they to interpret them as signs of divine anger, exhalations of vapours from the earth, or tricks played on the sight by the reflection of light? If they saw a dead person bleed freshly in the presence or at the touch of the suspected murderer, was this a miracle to sustain God's justice, the effect of physical links between two bodies agitated by antipathy or connected by corpuscular effluxes, a crude deception designed to remove the need for harder evidence, or the result of disturbing the corpse before the blood was fully coagulated? Was the visitation of an apparition a spiritual reality, a physical counterfeit, or merely a dream? Did a healer like the Restoration sensation Valentine Greatrakes cure by means of a heavenly dispensation, a natural quality in his own physiological make-up transmitted, again, by material effluvia, or by psychosomatic delusion?[29] Questions like this could be endlessly posed; but there is no need to add more or to see how they might have been

Orcsme on Marvels: A Fifteenth Century Work Printed in the Sixteenth Century', *Osiris.* 1 (1936), 629-35.

“ Lc Loyer, *Treatise ofspecters,* fos. 43'-l 16'; cf. Popkin, *History of Scepticism* 83.

” For details of these contemporary explanations of Greatrakes, see Barbara Beigun Kaplan, ‘Greatrakes the Stroker: The Interpretations of his Contemporaries*, *his,* 73 (1982) 178-85 esp 184-5, where Kaplan links them to the ‘preoccupation of science with problems involving’nonobse’rvables’ like magnetic attraction, the sanative qualities of the weapon salve, and the course of epidemics See alsoon the episode and its various interpretations, Michael McKeon, *Politics and Poetry in Restoration England- The Case of Dryden's 'Annus Mirabilis'* (London, 1975), 208-15; Duffy, ‘Valentine Grcatrakcs thelrishStroker’, 251-73.

answered to appreciate the dilemmas that could arise. The currency of equally plausible models of explanation was accompanied by strongly competing criteria for choosing between them. No doubt the ‘correct’ choice had always depended on official guidance, whether from clergymen or others. The explanatory concepts we have been considering were always associated with professional and institutional interests and their rivalry and their fragmentation were linked to the breakdown of old professional and institutional solidarities and the emergence of new ones. But now the professionals themselves were radically uncertain.[30] This is perhaps what the French prodigy collector Pierre Boaistuau had in mind (as well as the sense of *magnum in parvo* conveyed by the examples above) when he declared that even a bird born without feet yielded ‘sufficient matter to trouble all the philosophers in the world’.[31]

This suggestion that natural philosophers might have been disconcerted by the new extent of liminality in phenomena returns us to the function of the ‘prerogative instance’ and to the vogue for the marvellous in early modern culture. This last has often been attributed to naivety and an interest in the curious for its own sake, and these elements were certainly present and were criticized at the time. Thomas Sprat, for example, contrasted ‘the collection of Curiosities to adorn Cabinets and Gardens’ with ‘the solidity of Philosophical Discoveries’.[32] Printed collections of natural secrets and wonders were also aimed at the private pleasure of readers and at their ability to hold an eloquent and amusing conversation in polite circles.[33] All the same, it is misleading to suppose that a ‘sharp opposition’ existed between virtuosi, who wondered subjectively at things rare and strange, and ‘real natural philosophers’, who subjected them to serious, objective analysis and arrived at useful natural laws as a result.[34] ‘The same exotic or abnormal objects’, in any case, ‘could be approached from different points of view, as “wonders” to be rather superficially and mindlessly admired, or as specimens worthy of serious scholarly scrutiny.’[35] To take just Sprat’s example, the ‘cabinet of curiosities’ has a history that is inseparable from that of natural classification and cosmology, experimentation, the development of technology and of subject areas like medicine and geology, the origins of museums, and the institutionalization of science—not to mention what concerns us here, the intellectual utility of studying errant nature.[36]

[w] See, for example, Robert Boyle’s puzzlement over Greatrakes: Duffy, ‘Valentine Greatrakes, the Irish Stroker’, 268-9.

[11] Pierre Boaistuau [Launay], *Histoiresprodigieuses extraictes deplusieursfameuxautheurs ... nouvellement augmentées* (6 vols. in 3; Paris, 1597-8), i (vol. i). fo. 114 (first pub. 1560).

[11] Thomas Sprat, *History of the Royal Society,* cd. Jackson I. Cope and Harold Whitmore Jones (facs. of 1667 edn.) (London, 1959), 386.

[”] Brian Lawn, *The Salernitan Questions: An Introduction to the History of Medieval and Renaissance Problem Literature* (Oxford, 1963), 138-40; Eamon, ‘Arcana Disclosed’, 132. For a typical example, see René Francois [pseud.], *Essay des merveilles de nature, el des plus noble artifices,* 2nd edn. (Rouen, 1622).

[14] These are the terms adopted by Walter E. Houghton, Jr., ‘The English Virtuoso in the Seventeenth Century’, *J. Hist. Ideas,* 3 (1942), 192-205.

[”] Michael Hunter, *Establishing the Neu> Science: The Experience of the Early Royal Society* (Woodbridge, 1989), 135.

[“] Ibid. 123-155, on the Royal Society’s ‘Repository’; and, for similar examples, sec the essays in Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (eds.), 7Ae *Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in*

From Oresme in fourteenth-century Paris, to Thomas Sprat, John Aubrey, and Joseph Glanvill in later seventeenth-century London, marvels occupied a place of distinction on the agenda of topics of serious research.[37] It is impossible to read through the volumes of Lynn Thorndike's *History of Magic and Experimental Science* without sensing that what he says of the seventeenth century was true of this entire period: 'Not only [nature's] arcana and secrets, and mysteries and secret archives but its marvels and miracles were matters of incessant remark.'[38] Jean Céard has surveyed the very extensive sixteenth-century French literature dealing with 'the unusual' in nature (as well as the general features of natural 'variety' and 'vicissitude') and the way it raised fundamental conceptual issues in the overlapping territories of philosophy and theology.[39] In the next century, scientific societies all over Europe made it a priority—the Parisian Bureau d'Adresse, the Académie Royale des Sciences, the Royal Society of London, the German Collegium Naturae Curiosorum (later the Academia Naturae Curiosorum), and the medical faculty of the university of Copenhagen. In medical circles generally, research and writing on marvellous diseases and their hidden causes enjoyed a vogue.[40]

It seems that, in the epistemological conditions that obtained in many areas of early modern science, apparently anomalous phenomena did come to assume very much the sort of significance that Bacon claimed for them. A considerable amount of scholarly affort was devoted to subsuming them 'under some Form or fixed law', and, in the process, the very criteria of subsumption, and the nature of law' itself, were also scrutinized. Marvels, then, became vehicles of conceptual change. This represented a very considerable re-evaluation of the preternatural. Not properly knowable in the late medieval scheme of things—not properly part of *scientia,* indeed—the marvellous and the artificial were not only absorbed within the terrain of genuine science but came to occupy a commanding position there. Among the propagandists of the Royal Society, claimed the natural philosophical conservative, Meric Casaubon, in 1669, it had become ordinary 'to wonder at nothing, though never so wonderful and admirable, but what is unusual, far fetch'd, and seldom seen'.[41]

Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe **(Oxford, 1985); A. G. Keller, 'Mathematicians, Mechanics and Experimental Machines in Northern Italy in the Sixteenth Century', in Maurice Crosland (ed.),** ***The Emergence of Science in Western Europe*** **(New York, 1976), 18.**

" For Sprat and Glanvill, sec below, Ch. 19; for Aubrey, see Hunter, Join ***Aubrey,*** **93-147, esp. 124—47, for many instances of Aubrey's typical interest in preternatural phenomena (Hunter mostly prefers the label 'supernatural'). For some highly suggestive connections between the interest in natural philosophical marvels and the tradition of'paradoxy' in early modem Europe, sec Colie** ***Paradoxia Epidemica, 304-28.***

“ Thorndike, ***History of Magic,*** **vii. 8; typically, Thorndike calls this 'unscientific'.**

” Jean Céard, ***La Nature et lesprodiges: L'Insolite au XIV siècle, en France*** **(Geneva, 1977),** ***passim,*** **esp. 352-64.**

[40] See, for example, Antonius Beni venius, ***De abditts nonnullis ac mirandis morborum et sanalionum c<iu~sis*** **(Florence, 1507); Fcrncl,** ***De abditis rerum causir,*** **Marcellus Donatus,** ***De medico historia mirabili*** **(Venice, 1588); Johann Georg Schenck,** ***Observationum medicarum rariorum*** **(Frankfurt/Main 1600); Abraham Ben Samuel Zacuto,** ***Depraxi medico admiranda libri ires, in quibus exempla monstrosa rara, nova, mirabilia, circa abditas morborum causas, signa, eventus, atque curationes exhibita, diligentissime'proponunlur*** **(Amsterdam, 1634).**

« Meric Casaubon, ***A letter of Meric Casaubon to Peter du Moulin ... concerning natural experimental***

In what became a vast field, scholars lavished attention on particular instances, returning to them more frequently and with a more sustained interest than considerations of utility, self-interest, or ideological profit can alone explain. The subject of monstrous births agitated many of the best medical minds of the age—Jacob Rueff, Paré, Bartholinus, and Licctus among them—but had a currency in science far beyond specialist obstetrics or even general medicine. Here was an opportunity to profit, in Baconian style, from the scrutiny of a particularly obvious form of preternatural aberration. As a result, the treatment of monsters serves as an important indicator of changes in explanatory modes.[42] The scrutiny was not always sustained or successful; it disappeared altogether when aberration ceased to interest natural philosophers as much as regularity, and the medical discipline made monsters an ‘internal’ matter for anatomists and embryologists. But as long as the preternatural existed as a general category of phenomena—which it did at least until the closing years of the seventeenth century—monsters exerted a powerful appeal as ‘prerogative instances’. This is the reason for their importance to the natural historian Ulissc Aldrovandi, to Martin Wcinrich and Cardano, and to the members of the earliest scientific societies.

Concentration also fell heavily on individual instances in physical nature (magnetic attraction and repulsion, earthquakes, fossils, the tides), in the animal world (the ccheneis or remora, the basilisk), and in human behaviour (healing by touch,[43] the power of the imagination,[44] the historical existence of giants[45]). Constant reference was made to corpses that bled to reveal the murderer; it was remarked by Walter Charlcton that ‘scarce any Writer of the Secrets or Miracles of Nature, hath omitted the Consideration thereof.’[46] Here was a marvel with no practical significance outside the context of an increasingly archaic notion of justice, and no very serious implications for religious belief. Yet it was discussed by Mersenne, Descartes, and Comcnius, in a set of theses by the Lutheran academic Andreas Libavius, in monographs by the medical professors at Giessen (Gregory Horstius) and Uppsala (Johannes Frankenius), and in a disputation by the pedagogue Gottfried Voigt at Wittenberg—all this in addition to its appearance in books of marvels and secrets like those by Heinrich Kornmann, Juan Eusebio Nieremberg, Johann Michael Schwimmer, and Gaspar Schott.[47] Much the same could be said of the

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philosophic (1669), facs. repr. in Spiller, *‘Concerning Natural Experimental Philosophic*: Meric Casaubon and the Royal Society,* 172.

[42] Katharine Park and Lorraine Daston, ‘Unnatural Conceptions: The Study of Monsters in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France and England*, *Past an J Present*, 92 (1981), 20-54, esp. 24 and 45 for the approach I am also adopting. Cf. Kappler, *Alonstres, demons et merveilles,* 116-82,213-26.

[41] A section of the physician André Du Laurens’s treatise on scrofula is given over to showing how the French kings’ power to heal it did not derive from any natural magical or occult virtue; see the French trans., *Discours des escrouelles,* in *Les (Euvres de At. André Du Laurens* (Rouen, 1661), pt. 2,100-4; cf. Antonio De* Bernardi della Mirandola, *Disputationes* (Basel, 1562), 490,509-10.

[44] Thomas Fienus, *De viribus imaginations tractatus* (Louvain, 1608).

[45] Antoine Schnapper, ‘Persistancc des *gents', Anna les E. S. C.* 41 (1986), 177-200.

[44] Walter Charlcton, *Physiologia Epicuro-Gassendo-Charltoniana: or a fabrick of science natural, upon the hypothesis of atoms* (London, 1654), 364.

[47] Hansen, ‘Science and Magic’, 494-5, regards this case as typical of the philosophical genre of the ‘problem*, which ‘expanded so much in the early modern era that eventually entire monographs were

debates on the salve which supposedly healed wounds by being smeared on the still-bloody weapon that had caused them. Here there was an obvious practical application at stake—Kenelm Digby wrote in 1658 (in a study of the subject that went through twenty-nine editions) that almost every country barber-surgeon knew the formula.[48] But can this account for the attention given to the weapon salve in so many university disputations, and by a string of authors that included Gassendi, Fludd, Croll, Goclenius, Libavius, Senncrt, Van Helmont, and Boyle? More likely as a clue to its role in scientific speculation is the question posed at the outset of the Dillingcn professor Gaspar Wcnckh's book on the subject: 'On which philosophy is this remcdy based?'[49]

Published collections of preternatural phenomena and techniques, notably books of secrets and of *dubia* and *problemata,* likewise enjoyed extraordinary popularity. According to one assessment, the first became 'known to practically every intelligent reader of the sixteenth century'.[50] The term 'secret' was simply another way of referring to a marvellous effect with an occult cause—that is to say, one that was known *per experimentum,* not *perrationem,* like all idiosyncrasies and contingencies in Aristotelian nature. It could be applied to nature's spontaneous productions but usually referred to the recipes of art, particularly craft formulas, medical remedies, mechanical devices, and so on. Here was a genre, then, that shaded into both the provision of practical knowledge of various technical processes and skills, and the more elevated claims of the natural magicians. Medieval compilations attributed to Aristotle and Albertus Magnus were popular throughout the early modern period, but, even before Bacon was demanding the reform of 'books of fabulous experiments and secrets', European readers were being deluged by the secrets collected by contemporaries—particularly Italians like the suppositious 'Alessio Piemontese', Girolamo Ruscelli (probably the real 'Alessio' and founder of the Neapolitan *Accademia Segreta)*,[*x] and Leonardo Fioravanti, together with Antoine Mizaud and the physician and Basel professor Johann Jacob Wecker. William Eamon has suggested that such works impinged significantly on the general development of natural philosophy by presenting the secret as a tested and classified *experimentum* with practical and theoretical applications, by suggesting that scientific knowledge was characterized by the pursuit and disclosure of things hidden in the world, and by contributing to the

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devoted to a single "question" '. He adds a (partial) list of twenty-nine treatments of the subject between the 12th and 17th c. Contrast W. G. Aitchison Robertson, 'Bier-Right*, in proceedings of the P"* *Congres* /nZrma/wnj/</Wrr^^/jAW^(Intemat.Congressofthc Hist. ofMedicine; Geneva, 1926), 192-8, who gives useful summaries of some of the arguments but attributes their persistence to 'widespread superstition', credulity, and ignorance.

[41] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 191.

[49] Gaspar Wcnckh, *Notae unguenti magnetici et eiusdem actionis* (Dillingcn, 1626) 2

[50] William Eamon, 'Arcana Disclosed', 113, and 125-40 for what follows. Cf. id.,''From the Secretsof Nature to Public Knowledge', in David C. Lindberg and Robert S. Westman (eds.), *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge 1990), «p. 340-3;John K. Ferguson, *Bibliographical Note, on Hittoriet ofInventions and Books of Secrets* (2 pts.; Glasgow, 1883).

[51] William Eamon and France Paheau, *"The Accademia Segreta* of Girolamo Ruscelli- A Sixteenth-Century Italian Scientific Society*, *Isis,* 75 (1984), 327-42. ™scein. A aixteenm

emergence of rigorous analysis and attention to detail. One of Wecker's many translators and adaptors directed an English version of his *De secretis* to readers concerned with 'searching and easily producing the effects of what they formerly stigmatized with the brand of impossibility'. The distinction between knowable nature and unknowable (but experienced) preternature was, after all, only 'a seeming contradiction', and the text would effect a transfer of every kind of phenomenon (Wecker's topics were universal in range) from the second category to the first.[52]

Problem books too had a long pedigree in medieval scholarship and, especially, in traditional pedagogic techniques. Many of the set questions and disputation topics that had long been favoured as bases for teaching survived to form the core of the early modern compilations, and a high percentage of these dealt with marvels. Typical subjects were the wonderful attributes of animals, strange meteorological conditions, the causes of the tides, the nature of poisons and venoms, and magnetism. To these were eventually added questions issuing from the newer mathematical and experimental styles of natural philosophy; this was certainly not an archaic genre. As in the case of secrets, the range became gradually more encyclopaedic and access was made easier through translations and vernacular originals. Again we are told that this type of literature 'reached the height of its popularity' in the sixteenth century, and that 'there is scarcely a branch of seventeenth-century scientific and medical literature in which *[problemata]* do not occur.'[53] In the Paris of the 1630s and 1640s, for example, enthusiasts attended the private academy set up by Theophraste Renaudot, the Bureau d'Adresse, to debate well over 400 problems in a series of weekly seminars.

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Glancing through the topics for Renaudot's meetings one finds witchcraft, apparitions, divination, incubus and succubus devils, fascination, lycanthropy, and magical ligature.[54] But questions concerning the possibility and intelligibility of demonic phenomena were relevant to every aspect of the changes and confusions I have been summarizing—sometimes compounding them, sometimes provoked by them, but always intersecting with them. This is because demonic phenomena had, themselves, always been regarded as preternatural. There was not even an intellectual symbiosis of two dissimilar groups of problems; the areas of debate were, in fact, identical. There was, indeed, one debate. Thus, 'experiments of witchcraft' too offered the chance not merely to broaden a specifically Baconian concept of nature but to test those very criteria that made things natural (or preternatural, or supernatural) in the first place. Meric Casaubon—no friend of English 'new philosophy' but demonologically aligned with it—saw his 'proof' of spirits and witches as a test case in the classification and knowledge of preternatural phenomena, alongside topics like monsters, occult qualities, natural magic, mathematics, the powers of the imagination, divination, astrology, and prodigies. The inspiration for this kind of writing was overwhelmingly natural scientific, and certainly shaped by all the social and moral implications of taking up a natural scientific position. But no amount of witch-hunting can account cither for its importance in natural philosophical circles or its persistence there both in places where the legal prosecution of witches was absent and in times when it had declined or ceased.[55]

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[52] Johann Jacob Wecker, *Eighteen books of the secrets of art and nature,* trans. R. Read (London, 1660), 'To the Reader', sig. a2'. Read also enlarged Wecker's collection, which was originally published in 1582.

[55] *Lawn, Salernitan Questions,* 129, 141.

[54] *Recuei! general des questions traitdes e's conferences du Bureau d 'Adresse, sur toutes sortes de matieres,* orig. compiled by Theophraste and Eusebe Renaudot and re-ed. by Eusebe Renaudot (6 vols.; Lyons, 1666), iii. nos. 77^1,79^2,80^2; iv. no. 128; v. no. 173; ii. nos. 34', 36^1.

To begin with, demonology was implicated on a grand scale in all the shifts of emphasis that brought conceptual disturbance to the causal classifications of late medieval scientific scholarship. It figured prominently along the frontier between preternature and supernature, where natural philosophical choices were implied or pre-empted by religious commitments. It continued to be a vital principle, for both Protestants and Catholics, that miracles were, in causal terms, *stti generis,* and should be preserved from all contamination by demonic copies; in this general sense, medieval demonology continued to be the handmaid of early modern religion. At the same time, however, the new demands of controversy called for the discrediting of the supernaturalisms of religious opponents. Demonic *ntira,* demonic *praestigiae*—both procured by the collusion of clerics—could explain away Catholic miracles and Protestant prodigies with equal force. Wherever there was a question of reallocating religious phenomena for the purposes of polemic, demonology was on hand, so to speak, as an intellectual resource. In addition, its own status had to be defended from the downward pressures that were moving preternatural happenings across the frontier that separated them from natural ones. We saw earlier that from Pomponazzi to John Webster, and beyond, a great deal of scepticism about the reality of witchcraft rested on the argument that effects attributed to demons could be explained by natural (that is to say, natural *a nd* non-demonic) causes. Many of these causes, it is true, were still derived from preternature—from natural magical investigation for example—but, in time, familiarity weakened their marvellous character and facilitated their absorption into ordinary nature. Irrespective of whether the demonic was retained or rejected, it became a site where a contested boundary between classes of phenomena was fought over.[56]

Finally, demonology had much to contribute at the point where any striking and unusual phenomenon could be mistrusted as a sensory or conceptual illusion. This is not to say that the new Pyrrhonists themselves were particularly concerned with tracing uncertainty to demonic agency (although it is no coincidence, as we saw much

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” For the raising of such theoretical issues in the sphere of demonic possession, sec Ccrteau, *L 'Absent de I'histoire,* 27-31; Casa ubon's *Treatise proving spirits, witches and supernatural operations* was a reissue of his *Of credulity and incredulity; in things natural, civil and divine,* first pub. (without the third part on the divine) in 1668.

“ For a summary of the essential arguments, sec Claude Rapine [Caelestinus], *Des choses merveilleuses en nature,* trans. Jacques Giraud de Tornus (Lyons, 1557), 113-30 ('Des operations des mauvais espritz'), an expanded trans, of a Latin text *De his quae mundo mirabiliter eventual* (1542), itself based on Oresme's *De causis mirabilium.* Details in Hansen (ed.)» *Nicole Oresme,* 120-2; Ccard, *La Nature,* 174-8 340-3 earlier, that Descartes, attempting to bring the entire history of Pyrrhonism to a head, should have portrayed the most extreme of all knowledge predicaments as that state of total uncertainty in which every single perception of reality might be a trick played by an evil spirit). Nor did witchcraft theorists resort to systematic Pyrrhonism on any scale, their argument models came from Augustine and Aquinas. Nevertheless, there can be very few areas of early modern scholarship outside technical Pyrrhonism where the issues of sensory and mental uncertainty were as fully explored as they were in demonology. As the witchcraft debate gained momentum, so greater and greater exposure was given to the possibility of demonically induced error, and a steady flow of descriptions of just how it was achieved passed into general currency. At the same time, the discussions by witchcraft sceptics of the effects of melancholy on the human imagination represented an important application of medical opinion on the subject.[57]

It was this developing transfusion that enabled Le Loyer to add to his detailed examination of purely naturally caused illusion an account of how ‘the Divell doth sometimes convey and mingle himselfe in the Senses being corrupted, and in the phantasie offended.’ Some had argued that illusion was always non-demonic in origin—Le Loyer singled out Averroës and Pomponazzi (we might add Oresme)—but the devil too ‘by the subtiltie of his nature causeth the sight of things marvellous and supernatural!’, as well as the derangement of the internal faculties. Here was a ‘high and difficult’ matter, yet of the utmost consequence for philosophy, since handling it meant establishing the boundaries between natural and preternatural (Le Loyer’s English translator persisted with the term ‘supernatural’) causes. For Le Loyer the solution lay in witchcraft studies. That witches might confess that they left their bodies and flew ‘spiritually’ to sabbats was a clear case of demonic incursion into the sleeping imagination; no natural properties of unguents could (*pace* Della Porta) create the same effect. The phenomena associated with demonic sexuality and possession were of a similar kind, but the most dramatic indication of the lengths to which deception might be taken was what happened in cases of supposed metamorphosis. Le Loyer’s conclusions about what was truly and falsely done in these circumstances are very much the usual ones, but this is far less important than the type of analysis he attempts, its location in the context of a discussion of witchcraft, and the choice of precisely those topics that led witchcraft specialists themselves into their most protracted, most open, and epistemologically most significant discussions.[58]

Demonology was appealed to extensively, therefore, throughout the debates about the correct identification and allocation of puzzling phenomena. On the one hand, the demonic causation of individual events (however true or illusory) remained a very real possibility—perhaps even a heightened possibility, given the vogue for witchcraft studies—for virtually all the participants; even Pomponazzi had at least to consider it. In the complex tangle of competing explanations available to contemporaries, the demonological was one attractive option. Heavenly prodigies, bleeding corpses, apparitions, thaumaturgical healing, the weapon salve—all were commonly attributed to demons or had to be defended as non-demonic. There was scarcely a serious treatment of monstrous births that did not consider miscegenation involving humans and demons, and allow for the workings of sorcery and of demonic delusion. Substantial portions of Ambroise Pare’s *Des monstres et prodiges* read like a conventional demonology, while Rueff, Aldrovandi, Weinrich, Cardano, and Licctus all felt it essential to consider this type of explanation.[59]

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[57] See Chs. 11 and 12 above, and also Anglo, ‘Melancholia and Witchcraft’, 209-22.

[58] Le Loyer, *Treatise of specters*, fos. 117'-45' (quotations at 120', 117').

On the other hand, the fields of demonic magic and witchcraft provided their own striking examples of‘prerogative instances’, adding thereby to the huge fund of puzzling things that was available for philosophical and medical analysis. This is why we find Andreas Libavius, gymnasiarch of Rothenburg (and later the first director of the Casimir *Gymnasium* at Coburg) including a dissertation on the flight to the sabbat in the first section of his *Singularium.* a study of some of the ‘more secret and more difficult’ problems in natural philsophy.[60] It is also the explanation for the frequency—unaffected, it seems, by the decline in witchcraft prosecutions themselves—with which demonological topics were made the subject of university disputations and theses throughout the seventeenth century. The especially intractable subjects of attendance at sabbats (including *spiritualiter)*,*x demonic sexuality,[62] and metamorphosis[63] were leading candidates.[64] The Lübeck physics professor,Johann Sperling, listed all three among the *quaestiones* that he thought deserved consideration in connection with wagni; the Danzig philosophy professor Heinrich Nicolai was discussing them (and magic in general) with his student respondents in the late 1640s; the philosophy faculty at Rostock heard a disputation dealing with the first and third in 1669.[65] In Wittenberg in 1667 the second and third were aired in a disputation prompted by uncertainties in the interpretation of phe-

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” **Ambroise Parc, *Dei monstres et prodiges.* cd. Jean Ceard (Geneva, 1971), 80-100; Jacob Rueff, *De conceptu et generatione hominis, et iis quae circa haec potissimum consyderantur* (Zurich, 1554), fos. 60-62’; Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Monstrorum historia cum paralipomenis historiae omnium animalium.* cd. Bartholomaeus Ambrosinus (Bologna, 1642), 211-12,380-94,446; Martin Weinrich, *De ortu monstrorum commentarius* (n.p. [Leipzig?], 1595), fos. 83r—89’; Fortunius Licctus, *De monstrorum causis, natura, et differentiis (P&duii* 1616), 32, 127-8, 139-42. Sec also on demonology and monstrosity, Georg Stengel, *De monstris et monstrous* (Ingolstadt, 1647), 384-520.**

“ **Andreas Libavius, *Singularium pan prima. In qua de abstrusioribus, diffeilioribusque nonnullis in philosophia, medicina, chymia, etc quaestionibus ... plurimis accurate disseritur* (4 nts • Frankfurt/Main, 1599-1601), 320-6. rranwun/i ,**

[61] **Sec (at Leipzig University) Johan Gottlieb Hardt, *praeses* (Leonhardus Hilpcrtus, *respondent Dissert atto physico-histonca quam de strigiportio adspirante divina gratia* (Leipzig, 1680)**

[42] **And see, for other discussions, Donatus, *De medica historia mirabili.* fos. 249’-250r* Fortunius Affaytatus, *Phisicae ac astronomicae considerations* (Venice, 1549), fos. 3-7'**

" **See (it Strasburg Univercity) Wolfgang Ambrose Fabricius, *respondent* (Johann Rudolf Saltzmann, *praeses). Disputations de lycanthropia* (Strasburg, 1649).**

« **But see also these topics:Gottlob *Freygang,respondent* (Johann Muller,p«««), *Disputatio physica. de magi, tempt,'ala cunt,bus* (Wittenberg, 1676); Caspar Posner, *praeses* (Michael Dachselt, *respondent), Diatribephysica, de virunculis metalticis* (Jena, 1662).**

“ **Sperling, *Institutions physicae,* 367-74; Nicolai, *praeses, De magicis actionibus,* 73-144 and *passim-,* Schütze, *praeses. Disputatio physica de magia.* sigs. C2’-C4’.**

nomena like magnetism, the weapon salve, the swimming of witches, and the *virgula Mercuriali.*[66] Natural philosophers should pay especial attention to metamorphosis, argued one Corbach academic, and decide not only if it was real or fantastic but 'how it might occur, whether through a physical and natural, or a preternatural reason.'[66] [67] Among those who did so were the professor of logic and metaphysics, and rector, at Jena, Thomas Sagittarius, and twelve professors at the *Gymnasium* at Speier.[68] The demonic causes of diseases attracted attention in the medical faculties for the same reasons.[69] 'Fascination' in particular was popular, with its problematic action at a distance.[70] Mcrscnne was corresponding on it, as well as on the healing power of words and the possessions at Loudun, in the years that saw his adoption of the mechanical philosophy; Newton was making comments on it in a notebook of 1664-5, and 'read widely on reports of spirit testimony and of fascination'.[71] Bacon's own choice of a worthwhile 'experiment of witchcraft' concerned the transitive power of the imagination; Della Porta's celebrated example (we recall) involved the physical properties of the witches' ointment and its effects on the unconscious.

It is a further illustration of these interconnections that demonology was frequently drawn on in the literature of secrets and wonders.[72] There is a compact demonology in Wccker's *De secretis,* and individual demonological topics are treated in the collections of *dubia* of the Portuguese Antonio Ludovico (Antão Luis) and the Spaniards Luis de Escobar and Alonso de Fuentes. The latter's *Summa dephilosophia natural* exemplifies the presentation of a very traditional natural philosophy in the form of questions and answers devoted to *problemata* and it included the case of just how far demonic agency and knowledge extended.[73] Again there is much

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[66] Buggcs, prenex, *Disputatiophysica,* sigs. A2·”^{r}, A4’-BP; cf. the Wittenberg disputation on all three, Martinus, *praeses, Diaskepsis philosophica, passim,* and from the same faculty, Johannes Clodio, *praeses* (Johannes Christophorus Rudingerus, *respondent), De spiritibus familiaribus vulgo sic dictis* (Wittenberg, 1678).

***[7] Scribonius, *De sagarum natura,* fo. 66’, see also 58’ on flight to the sabbat.**

[u] Thomas Sagittarius,*praeses* (various *respondentes) Exercitationesphysicae* (Jena, 1614), sigs. Ii2^{r}-Ii3^{r}. Sagittarius said he disapproved of those who intruded questions about angels into physics, but, besides metamorphosis, he also included a discussion of whether witches or devils could cause storms: sigs. A4’-Bl^{r}, Aa2’-Aa3^{f}; for Speier (plus further dissertations concerning werewolves at Leipzig and Wittenberg), see Ginzburg, *Ecstasies,* 176 n. 29.

' Michaelis, *praeses, Morbos ab incantatione et veneficiis oriundos.

[70] See, for example, Franciscus Perez Cascalcs, *Liber de affectionibus puerorum ... altera vero defascinatione* (Madrid, 1611), fos. 120—9; Johann Christian Frommann, *Tractatus de fascinatione* (Nuremberg, 1675), a volume based on the eight disputations at which Frommann was *praeses* (with eight different respondents), all at Coburg between 1670 and 1674.

[71] On Newton, see Schaffer, ‘Occultism and Reason*, 125—6,128.

[72] Illnesses and other attacks attributed to witchcraft and sorcery were also the subject of‘secret’ remedies; see, *for* example, Wolfgang Hildebrand, *Magia naturalis, das ist; Kunst und Wunderbuch, dannnen begrijfen Wunderbare Secreta, Geheimnüsse und Kunststücke* (Leipzig, 1610), 168-77, 211-18; Florian Canale, *De 'secreti universals raccolti, e esperimentali... trattati nove* (Venice, 1640), 201—4 (first pub. 1613).

[71] Alonso de Fuentes, *Summa de philosophia natural* (n.p. [Seville], 1547), fos. ix’—xii^{r}; cf. Wcckcr, *Eighteen books of the secrets of art and nature,* 4-9 (Wecker also published *Hexenbüchlein, das ist eine wahre entdeckung underkidrung der Zauberey und was von Zauberem, Unholden, Hengs ten Nachtschaden, Schützen, Auch derHexenhdndelzu haltensei(\515),* in *Theatrum de venefeis,* 306-24 and featured in the compilation of demonological materials published by Wolfgang Hildebrand as *Goetia, vet theurgia, sive praestigiarum*

demonology in the general accounts of curious natural and human behaviours. In his *La Curiositê naturelle,* for example, Henri IV's councillor and historiographer Scipion Duplcix discussed two classic witchcraft items, the transformation of witches into wolves and their power to fascinate.[7^] In Gaspar Schott s'*Physica ettriosa* there is in fact a major, wholly standard synthesis of later seventeenth-century Catholic demonolog}', alongside sections on ghosts, miraculous races, demoniacs, monsters, portents, animal marvels, and meteors. Schott s rhetorical challenge to his readers seeks to justify the whole genre:

> What is more to be admired, what more worthy of human curiosity, that is to say, of exact and careful examination, than ... to understand the amazing works of demons, apparently exceeding the whole power of nature, and assign each of them a cause drawn from philosophy? Who does not wish to know and perceive more deeply what is everywhere spread abroad concerning incubus and succubus devils, mountains and metals, the transporting of witches and magicians, the mutation of the sexes, and the bringing of beasts and men back to life?[75]

As the eighteenth century opened, the rector of the *Gymnasium* at Rudolstadt, Johann Michael Schwimmer, was discussing metamorphosis as one of nature's 'delightful' puzzles.[76] But if the specialist literature on demonic magic and witchcraft contributed such topics to the wider debate, it also absorbed them—as well as the habit of posing *dubia* and *problemata.*[11] One of the most striking things about it is how often the reader is led away from the expected subjects and themes. Clearly the intention was often to examine any phenomenon of sufficiently dubious credentials to warrant the suspicion that it was demonically caused. But this cannot have been solely a matter of morality. Within literally a few pages of opening Del Rio's *Disquisitionum magicarum* we find him tackling the validity of entire sciences such as natural magic, astrolog}', mathematics, and alchemy, as well as questions about whether there is any physical efficacy in the innate qualities of magical practitioners, or in the human imagination, or in the use of ritual touching, looking, speaking, breathing, and kissing, and about whether characters, sigils, arithmetical and musical notation, words, charms, and amulets have any intrinsic powers.

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magicarum descriptio ...Das ist, Wahre und eigentliche Entdeckunge, Declaration oder Erkldrungfurnehmer Articul der Zauberey (Leipzig, 1631), 210 ff.; Antonius Lodovicus, *Problematum* (Lisbon, 1539 [colophon 1540]), bk. 3, pt. 1, fos. 41 *-42'; Luis de Escobar, *La segundaparte de las quatrocientas respuestasaotraspreguntas* (Valladolid, 1552), fos. cxxix'-cxxx'; Lawn, *Salernitan Questions,* 138, 132, 137; and, for a list of what Lawn calls 'questions devoted to magic and superstition' in zoology, see p. 49 n. 3.

[74] Scipion Dupleix, *La Curiosite naturelie* (Rouen, 1635), 393-4 (first pub. 1606). Sec also Simon Maiolus, *Colloquiorum site dierum camcularium continuatio et supp/ementum* (Mainz 1608) 215-328 ('De sagis'), bound with *id., Dies caniculares, hoc est colloquia tria et viginti physica, nova et penit'us admiranda ac summa iucunditate concinnata* (Mainz, 1607), first pub. 1597.

’’ Gaspar Schott, *Physica curiosa, site mirabilia naturae et artis* (Wurzburg, 1667) sig d3' angelology at 1-25, demonology at 25-195 (considerably expanded from the version in the 1662 edn.)- cf. id. *Maria universalis naturae etartis,* 39-44.

[76] Johann Michael Schwimmer, *Deliriaephyiicae: Das ist, Physicalische Ergetzlichkeiten* (Erfurt, 1701), 61—72.

[77] For examples of demonology presented as *dubia,* sec Vincti, *Tractatus contra demonum invocatores',* Binsfeld, *Tractatus.*

In this work and in other demonologies of similar scale, such as Torreblanca's *Daemonologia* and Giovanni Tommaso Castaldi's *De potestate angelica,* an enormous variety of subjects is examined for their standing in reality and in knowledge, and not just in morality or the conscience. At the end of his second volume, Castaldi, having already considered natural and other forms of magic, the traditional topics of witchcraft theory, the arts and prodigies of the Antichrist, the healing power of the kings of France, the question of bodily transmutation, and the power of demons over magicians, sorcerers and evildoers, adds a 'disputatio unica' in which he asks of particular wonders whether they are natural or 'superstitious' (real or false). These include the movements of the tides, the possibility of speaking statues, the effects of spoken words and music on animal behaviour, the power of fascination, the extraction of solid objects from the human body, and the proper cure for tarantism.[78]

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A final way to see the meshing of demonology with other similar discussions of questionable and marginal phenomena is to look at individuals whose overall scientific interests suggest that they were led to the former through their concern to interpret the latter. This appears to have been the case with Georgius Pictorius [Joerg Maier], a schoolmaster and a professor of medicine at Freiburg im Breisgau, and from 1540 on, physician at Ensisheim in Upper Alsace, who in 1563 published a collection of four tracts under the title *Pantopolion.*[79] Three were on straightforwardly demonological topics—a study of demons and their powers, an attack on *goetia,* and a justification of the death penalty against witches. The opening tract, however, was a *carmina* in celebration of the marvels of man and nature. For Lynn Thorndike, this juxtaposition was significant for its incongruity—the mixing in one volume of 'superstition' and (albeit marvel-mongering) science. But the reading I am proposing suggests the fitness of first stressing the preternatural component in nature before showing (as usual) that the devil was not merely limited in principle to *mira* but was actually responsible for only a limited number of them. Pictorius was simply deploying the conventional grid of causation from the other direction. The devil could not be the agent of every wonderful happening, he said, 'for we must give unto Nature that which seemeth to belong unto her who is said to be the greatest worker of Miracles.' Pictorius went on to list the usual examples and to add that art too sometimes imitated nature in the working of marvellous effects. Apart from the short outburst against witches, fuelled largely by religious outrage, his interest in demonology seems to have been as an instance of the preternatural and not the other way round—hence the reappearance in translation in Cromwellian England of the tract on demons as an adjunct to the suppositious Book 4 of Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy.*[90]

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[71] **Giovanni Tommaso Castaldi, *De potestate angelica sive de potentia motrice, ac mirandis operibus angelorum atque d[ae] monuni, dissertatio* (3 vols.; Rome, 1650-2), ii. 593-612 (for witchcraft see esp. ii. diss, iv and vi). Cf. Pierre de Lancrc, *L'lncredulite et mescreance du sortilegeplainement convaincue* (Paris, 1622); here the topics are the reality of sorcery, fascination, whether touching can itself harm or heal, divination, and how to distinguish between good and evil apparitions.**

[79] **On Pictorius, sec Thorndike, *History of Magic,* vi. 399—406; Midelfort, *Witch Hunting,* 59-65.**

[w] **I have used this trans, of'De illorum daemonum qui sublunari collimilio versantur' made by Robert**

Another book of 1568 containing 300 *quaestiones* in natural knowledge shows Pictorius to have been a specialist in the field of marvels, and a yet further *Opera nova in quibus mirifica ... complectitur* the next year again situated demons in precisely that context.[81]

Pictorius's almost exact contemporary Girolamo Cardano (from whom he took many of his instances) stands out as perhaps the sixteenth century's greatest enthusiast for the pursuit of marvellous phenomena; he was, says William Eamon, a 'professor of secrets *par excellence*'.[82] His *De subtilitate* and *De rerum varietate* were known and cited throughout early modern scholarship and represent classics of natural magical literature. Their very titles promised the investigation of nature's most obscure and 'subtle' manifestations, 'whose sensible aspects are grasped with difficulty by the senses, and whose intellective aspects are grasped with difficulty by the intellect'.[83] In addition, Cardano was author of *De secretis,* where 100 projected studies of secrets in every branch of human knowledge were planned.[84] Demons and witches were most certainly included in his ample intellectual embrace, but it cannot be claimed that his interest in these subjects stemmed from moral concern or, evidently, any great wish to punish. We saw earlier that, like Weyer, who borrowed from him, he thought that witches' confessions could be attributed to melancholy and the effects of torture; most of the stories told of them were untrue and the sabbat was a myth. Instead, Cardano approached these matters as problems in the understanding of preternatural phenomena, insisting that his criteria were 'philosophical', not theological.[85] In *De subtilitate,* the section 'De daemonibus' followed on logically from 'De mirabilibus'; and in *De rerum varietate,* demons were included in a book entitled 'De rebus praeter naturam admirandis', along with such things as sigils, natural magic, the magic arts of Artephius and Mihemius, and the properties of enchantments. One senses that his obvious opposition to witch trials stemmed from indignation at (what he saw as) egregious philosophical error, as much as from moral and religious distaste.

The case of Gottfried Voigt takes us forward a century but the matter of context and the priorities it reveals remain the same. In 1667 Voigt defended a dissertation *De conventu sagarum ad sua sabbata* at Wittenberg. Reading this as one more item in

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Turner and added to his edn. of the suppositious bk. 4 of Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia [Henry Cornelius Agrippa, his fourth book of occult philosophy,* trans. Robert Turner (London, 1655)], with the title 'Isagoge: An introductory discourse of the nature of such spirits as are exercised in the sublunary bounds'; quotation at 133-4.

[81] Georgius Pictorius, *Physicarum quaestionum centuriae ires* (Basel, 1568); id., *Opera nova, in quibus mirifica, iocos salesque, poetica, historica el medica ... complectitur* (Basel, n.d. [1569]), 64-8. On the first of these, see Lawn, *Salernitan Questions,* 133.

[82] Eamon, 'Arcana Disclosed', 136; cf. Fierz, *Girolamo Cardano,* p. xvi and *passim.*

[83] Cardan, *De subtilitate,* in *Opera,* iii. 357.

[84] See esp. ch. 1, 'Quid sit secretum', and study no. 20, 'De invisis: seu per Daemonas. scu alio modo fiant', in *Opera,* ii. 537, 548-9.

[85] For a commentary on Cardano's discussion of witchcraft, conducted in the same spirit, see Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Exotericarum exercilationum liber xv, de subtilitate, ad Hieronymum Cardanum* (Frankfurt/Main, 1592), 1085, see also 1088-93 (on demons).

the bibliography of witchcraft, one might be tempted to call Voigt just another ‘demonologist’. He argued with utter conventionality that the transportation of witches to sabbats by the devil was a real, physical possibility. But when, four years later, as rector of the *Gymnasium* at Güstrow in Mecklenburg, he published his *Deliciae physicae,* the dissertation subject, along with a debate about the demonic generation of infants, became part of a sequence of studies of classic ‘prerogative instances’—the corpse that bleeds because the murderer is near it (which Voigt, after considering all the other explanations, attributed to pure chance), the tears shed by crocodiles, the bears that lick their cubs into shape, the love between sheep and wolves, fossil fish and flying fish, hartshorn, and falling stars. Voigt was evidently not a specialist in demonology, and the prefatory verses to his collection compared its *occulta* to those researched by Lemnius, Schott, and Schwcnterus.[86] The fact that he had earlier issued another set of curiosities in natural history, as well as leaving thirty manuscript dissertations on these themes behind him when he died, suggests that his specialism—and, no doubt, his delight—was the study of puzzling zoological and botanical rarities.[87] The relevance of the transportation of witches and of demonic generation (two of the most ‘open’ issues in demonology) to his main interests was thus formal rather than substantive—a matter of scientific genre. It was to do with what *any* intractable problem in the understanding of nature might reveal about the process of understanding itself.

* * *

My argument has been that witchcraft authors were participating, from a particularly pertinent vantage point, in a series of investigations concerning the status of puzzling phenomena—puzzling because the categories for placing them in a scheme of intelligibility were themselves in disarray. The singular and the unusual continued to excite interest in the eighteenth century—for example, in the cosmology of the Abbé Pluche and the natural history of Buffon.[88] Such items were still situated, it has been said, ‘at the heart of the natural philosophical project’.[89] The professor of medicine at Göttingen from 1776 to 1840, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, spoke in precisely Baconian terms when he claimed that ‘the aberrations of nature out of her usual course shed more light on obscure researches than does her ordinary and regular course.’[90] Anomalies were a continual challenge to the elaboration of classification

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[u] **Gottfried Voigt, *Deliciae physicae* (Rostock, 1671), verses at sig. A6^{M}; summary of contents in Thorndike, *History of Magic,* viii. 283-4. The original dissertation on witches appeared as *De conventu sagarum adsua sabbata* (Wittenberg, n.d. [1667?]), with Philipp David Fuhrmann, *respondent.***

[n] **Gottfried Voigt, *Curiositates physicae* (Güstrow, 1668), dealing with the reconstitution of animals and plants from their ashes, the song of the dying swan, the congress and birth of vipers, and the birth of the chameleon. Cf. the posthumous collection, *Al. Gottfried Voigts neu-vennehrter physicaltscher Zeitvertreiber, darinne Drey-HundertAuserlesene, Lustige, Anmuthige Fragen, a us dem BuchderNaturbeantwortet... werden* (Leipzig, 1694), demonological subjects at 142-7,521-2, 572-83.**

[M] **Roger Hahn, *The Anatomy of a Scientific Institution: The Paris Academy of Sciences, 1666-1803* (London, 1971), 88.**

[”] **Simon Schaffer, ‘Natural Philosophy’, in G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter (cds.), *The Ferment of Knowledge: Studies in the Historiography of Eighteenth-Century Science* (Cambridge, 1980), 84.**

[90] **Cited by Canguilhem, *Itudes,* 213.**

systems, and were employed by those who questioned the utility of systems altogether to cast doubt on nature's supposed conformity to law. But the hegemonic rationalism of the mathematical and mechanical sciences was increasingly distrustful of the concept of natural aberration. In this respect, the biologists lost out to the physicists. For modern philosophers like Bachelard and Canguiihem, what distinguishes 'natural philosophy' from 'science' is precisely the former's tolerance of variety. The debates on monster births at the Academic Royale des Sciences down to 1776 reveal a shift away from attributing them to divine intervention ('preformationism') towards seeing them as exceptions to biological laws ('accidentalism').[91] Witches, then—like convulsionaries and vampires—might continue to be debated in academic circles and yield critical instances.[92] But they were eventually displaced as objects of natural philosophical interest, even where the accidental retained its importance. And the duck-billed platypus—Blumenbach's most celebrated example—does not somehow have quite the same impact.

” **Patrick Tort,** ***L 'Ordre et les monstres: Le Debat sur lorigine des deviations analomiques au Xt'iir siecle*** **(Paris, 1980).**

,J **On vampires, see Klaniczay,** ***Uses of the Supernatural,*** **178-84.**

18

The Magical Power of Signs

> And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.
>
> (Genesis 2:19)

> Whosoever is acquainted with books and reading, shal every where meet a world of the wonders of cures, by words, by lookes, by signes, by figures, by characters, and ceremonious rites.
>
> (John Cotta, *Triall of witch-craft)*

ONE of the ironies of the history of witchcraft beliefs is that the modern scientific notion of the ‘occult’, which stresses ///efficacy, applies not to the things that witchcraft theorists accepted as true but to the things they themselves rejected as false (that is, unless we are going to label all outmoded science ‘occult’). This is another reminder that decisions of this sort arc always licensed by historically particular conceptions of reality. Demonology was certainly an ‘occult’ science for contemporaries because it relied on a devil who specialized in operating with the hidden properties of nature. But these were thought to be real properties capable of causing real events. They therefore had nothing to do with what is condemned as ‘occult’ today. In their own terms, writers on demonology were never exponents of inefficacious science.

In fact, they denounced it wherever they found it—whether in popular misapprehensions concerning the workings of the maleficent arts, or in the delusions of those who allegedly practised them. (They were also inveterate opponents of judicial astrology.) It was one of their most insistent claims that the causality presupposed by the actions of magicians and witches was altogether spurious. They rigorously applied the principle that there must be limits to the natural powers of every creature, and they argued that any attempt by men and women to exceed their particular natural capacities (if it was not properly sanctioned by religion) implied demonic assistance. ‘Whoever tries with natural instruments to do things that surpass the strength of nature’, we recall Erastus insisting, ‘using neither the help of God nor that of good Angels, is necessarily appealing for demonic aid by means of an open or secret pact.” This, in its causal essence, was what magicians and witches did.

All their ‘natural instruments’—and as we shall see in a later part of this book, many of the routine material practices of the general populace—were judged according to

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[1] **Erastus, *Deux Dialogues,* 499 (and see above, Ch. 12); for the same statement, see Roberts, *Treatise ofwitchcraft,* 77-8.**

this rubric, and most were found wanting." ’But a particular favourite was the case of the efficacy of words; or, more strictly, the words, characters, images, and figures—that is to say, signs—in which maleficent intentions were so typically embodied. It was obvious to everyone that magicians and witches used linguistic and symbolic instruments, and assumed by many (especially their victims) that these had, as Perkins put it, ‘a miraculous efficacie to bring some extraordinarie and unexpected thing to passe’.[2] [3] Charms, spells, and curses produced physical changes in objects and persons; actions done to images were conveyed to the things the images depicted; talismans drew down harmful qualities from higher powers. These were indispensable items in the lexicon of the evil arts; in many ways they represented the core of magic and witchcraft in their familiar, everyday appearance. Balduin, the Lutheran casuist, wrote that nothing was more commonly used in the ceremonies of magicians and witches than words, while Perkins thought that the charm was the quintessential expression of witchcraft, the category to which all its other manifestations could be reduced: ‘In a word, looke whatsoever actions, gestures, signes, rites, and ceremonies are used by men or women to worke wonders, having no power to effect the same... they must all be referred to this head, and reckoned for Charmes.’[4]

‘... having no power to effect the same ...’ Why were signs inefficacious? In answering this, writers on witchcraft revealed again the naturalism that has been the subject of my preceding chapters. The problem of the efficacy of signs was also another ‘prerogative instance’; it raised all the usual doubts about the differentia of natural, preternatural, and supernatural causes, and it impinged on two major controversies of the period—one concerning the role of utterances and symbols in religious worship, the other the validity of the Neoplatonist and ‘Hermetic’ contributions to natural philosophy. Above all, however, witchcraft authors had now to enunciate a theory of the sign; to become, as it were, ordinary language philosophers. The one they advocated was, as usual, not their own, but they were among the most consistent of its exponents. The theory itself and its history are of considerable significance in belonging to a system of possibility of knowledge to which the character and fortunes of natural philosophy were necessarily tied. What can be traced in their pages is a version of the relationship that has recently preoccupied cultural theory—the relationship between signs and referents.

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The belief that utterances can themselves effect physical change, or assist in the effecting of it, has had a wide cultural diffusion. Anthropologists, familiar with it in the context of many non-European, ‘traditional’ societies (and begging the question of what is meant by ‘magical’), have referred to it as the belief in ‘the magical power of words’.[5] S tried) interpreted, it seems to require the separation of the instrumental from the communicative aspects of language. That words have, simply by virtue of being uttered, a mechanical power to cause or prevent events—‘that’, in Malinowski’s formulation, ‘to know the name of a thing is to get a hold on it’—is different in kind from their ability to convey meaning between speakers and recipients. When material benefit is expected to accrue from a god, spirit, or ancestor who is correctly asked to provide it, the emphasis must be on the intelligibility of the communication to the addressee. When material benefit is attributed to the words themselves, an alternative felicity is sought. The social and institutional setting may well reinforce this distinction. The different expectations of priests and people, or healers and patients, may lead to variant uses of the word, the professionals relying on communication, their clients on instrumentality. It is the case that religious belief systems often include in their view of language the idea of the sacred word as agent. In profane contexts this can be taken more literally than is intended.

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[2] Inefficacy was also central to religious definitions of‘superstition’; see below, Ch. 32.

[1] Perkins, *Discourse,* 131.

[4] Ibid. 152-3; cf. Fridrich Balduin, *Tractatus luculentus, posthumus, toti reipublicae christianae utilissimus, de materia rarissime antehac enucleata, casibus nimirum conscientiae summo studio elaboratus* (Wittenberg, 1654), 542 (first pub. 1628).

In practice, however, the separation of instrumentality from communication is difficult to sustain. Rituals combine words and actions, saying and doing, in complex ways. Utterances often have a performative role in ritual discourse that is coterminous with their communicated meaning, and only rarely is causal potency expected from meaningless words (non-sense is, in any case, a category of meaning). All too often, what is a meaningless ‘spell’ to the outsider turns out to be meaningful to the internal speaker who regards it as a distinct style of address—a summons, an invocation, a command, a plea, or whatever. Frequently, it is no more than a systematic inversion of ordinary language conventions, and thus just as conventional. But even gibberish may be the appropriate form of words with (say) devils, who are assumed to understand its logic. Above all, the likelihood arises that, even when actually addressed to inanimate objects (such as agricultural implements or tools for building canoes) and couched explicitly in causal terms, ‘magical’ words are in fact directed at the human actors in the ritual. This is because their meaning is taken to be not literal but metaphorical. Thus, Stanley Tambiah has argued that what is essentially a mental substitution is given ‘operational reality’ by the use of material objects as metonymic transformers. Those who believe in ‘the magic power of words’ do not have to think there is a causal connection between words and their referents; they may simply be exploiting the expressive capacities of language in a technological context heightened by ritual.

To be an anthropologist is to confront these difficulties in deciding just how speakers in ‘other’ cultures relate words and things. But historians of early modern Europe have recently found themselves with the same problems. Scattered evidence of what appears to be the ‘magical’ use of words in many daily routines and rituals is

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’ **The classic account is *S.J.* Tambiah, ‘The Magical Power of Words’, *Man,* NS 3 (1968), 175-208, repr. in id., *Culture, Thought, and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective* (London, 1985), 17-59.1 am dependent on Tambiah for what follows in this paragraph and the next. See also Robin Horton, ‘African Traditional Thought and Western Science’, in Bryan R. Wilson (ed.), *Rationality* (Oxford, 1974), 155-8.**

so plentiful that a general belief in their direct material efficacy can easily be inferred. In Lutheran Germany, for example, it was reported in the 1590s that 'the use of spells is so widespread among the people here that no man or woman begins, undertakes, does, or refrains from doing, desires or hopes for anything without using some special charm, spell, incantation, or other such heathenish medium.'[6] The usual view has been that, without intending this, medieval Catholicism encouraged the idea that merely the uttering of sacred words over material objects could change their substance and their efficacy. 'Catholic liturgical practices', it is said, '... involved both an other-worldly salvific purpose and an inner worldly instrumental purpose', an ambiguity that allowed blessings and exorcisms, for example, to work automatically in bringing physical benefits simply by virtue of being correctly said *(per vim benedictionis).*[7] Reflection on the nature of language and the power of signs was thus an inseparable component of religious reform, a fact that made reformers, not anthropologists, the first to distinguish systematically between the properties of the intercessionary prayer and the mechanical spell or incantation.[8] Between, and within, Catholic and Protestant communities, the power of words, gestures, and symbols became a major item of theological and liturgical contention. Between reformers of all persuasions and the ordinary laity, it became a badge of growing cultural differentiation. Both these developments came together in the verdict that to suppose that signs could act transitively on the objects they referred to was a form of 'superstition'.

Reservations about whether the 'superstitious' ever did actually suppose this—or, if they did, whether this was just 'superstition'—might well be applied as fruitfully to early modern Europeans as to Malinowski's Trobrianders. But for the historian of demonology it is the *opinion* that they did that matters, not its fidelity to anyone's real intentions. Just as reformers of religious behaviour, and of popular culture in general, went on to condemn the belief in the 'magical' use of words as demonic, so the specialists on witchcraft acknowledged it as a key element in the credibility of the witch. The 'simple' people, complained Thomas Ady, 'thought that words spoken in a strange manner had vertue and efficacy in them', believing more in 'the vertue of words than they credit the truth of Gods Word'.[9] The general view, throughout Europe, was that a readiness to accept that words and other signs themselves had efficacy sustained the popular notion of witchcraft as the possible, but purely human, product of malevolent will, the self-image of those who thought they possessed its powers, and many of the protections and remedies mustered against them. In the present context, what is interesting about this view is not whether it was right but what notions of language and signification lay behind it.

Discussion of the religious implications of what was said on these deeper matters must also be postponed for the moment; it is the question of witchcraft as a subject for science that concerns us here. For in natural philosophy too, the problem of language and its uses was crucial and contentious; crucial to the processes of epistemological formulation and change, and contentious enough to become a major focus of intellectual allegiance. This is the claim made by Foucault in his ‘archaeological’ history of the human sciences, an account of those deep layers where not knowledge itself but the historically different epistemological fields that make it possible are uncovered. Foucault argued that the discontinuity that separated the (in his terms) pre-Classical from the Classical age was marked by a fundamental shift in the relationship between words and things. Until the early to middle part of the seventeenth century, the order discerned in things was itself linguistic. Language, he says, was ‘interwoven’ with the world and resided in its forms as their ‘prose’. It was not something arbitrary whose importance lay simply in its ability to convey meaning. Rather, its capacity to signify stemmed from the fact that it was related by analog}' to the things it depicted. Knowledge consisted, in effect, in relating one form of language to another, and only historical degeneration prevented words from acting, like those in the original language of peoples (Hebrew) in immediate conformity with things. For the earliest speakers, ‘the names of things were lodged in the things they designated ... by the form of similitude.”[0]

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[6] Cited by Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (London, 1978), 304; for the Italian countryside, see Burke, *Historical Anthropology* 121-2.

[7] R. W. Scribner, 'Ritual and Popular Religion in Catholic Germany at the Time of the Reformation', *J. Ecclesiastical Hist.* 35 (1984), 70.

[8] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 61, see also 41.

[9] Ady, *Candle in the dark,* 30,54, see also 47-9.

Foucault associated the cpistemc that enabled language to be thought of like this in the sixteenth century with the doctrine of natural signatures. This was the idea that natural objects were marked with signs that indicated their hidden meaning, and, thus, their use, by resembling what they signified. His argument was that the Renaissance commonplace concerning nature as a ‘text’ was not merely a metaphor for natural knowledge; it referred to a genuine act of reading based on the principle of resemblance. Moreover, to manipulate natural signatures was at the same time to manipulate the properties they signified. The language of nature was, therefore, endowed with transitive effects which the language of men and women could replicate. Here, too, the ideal linguistic forms were those that came first in time and to which all later languages were approximations. Theorists of language like Blaise de Vigenère and Claude Duret thought that it was possible ‘that before Babel, before the Flood, there had already existed a form of writing composed of the marks of nature itself, with the result that its characters would have had the power to act upon things directly, to attract them or repel them, to represent their properties, their virtues, and their secrets.’[10] [11]

From the seventeenth century onwards, the conditions of knowledge and the organization of signs were thought of in very different terms. What was now important about language was its ability to mirror nature, not resemble it. It entered what Foucault called ‘a period of transparency and neutrality’;[12] representation became its essential task. The man-made arbitrariness of signs was now insisted upon. They could no longer exist as natural entities independently of being known, and natural resemblance could no longer enter as a third term between signify and signified; the relationship between these was binary and intellective, between the *idea of one thing* and the *idea of another*'.[13] The conventionality of the sign has, in recent times, been reiterated by Saussure and other linguistic structuralists. But for Saussureans it has meant the relativizing of understanding. The meaning that an individual sign conveys can only be a function of its relationship to the total system of differentiation in which it exists and can only be grasped by reference to it. In the seventeenth century other deductions were drawn. Precisely because language was artificial, men and women should be able to devise names for things that corresponded with ever-increasing faithfulness to the sense impressions they received of them. Language was seen as essentially nomenclative and there was, so to speak, a pre-Saussurean confidence in its capacity to follow reality. Here, conventionality became the servant of philosophical realism. Foucault wrote that after this change in early modern views about language: 'The manifestation and sign of truth are to be found in evident and distinct perception. It is the task of words to translate that truth if they can.'[14]

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[10] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology ofthe Human Sciences,* trans, anon. (London, 1974), 36.

" Ibid. 38.

[12] Ibid. 56.

This account of early modern linguistics is helpful in two ways.[15] It identifies the contrasting conditions that made it possible either to assert or deny 'the magical power of words'. And it traces them to a deep level of influence, part of what Foucault called the 'fundamental configuration' of knowledge in the period. Support for his general typology (though not, it should be noted, for its detailed accuracy) has come from studies of the great interest in hieroglyphic writing and in emblematically conceived natural history in the later Renaissance, and of the growing preoccupation with the reform of nomenclature and taxonomy during the next age.[16] Yet for all its insights Foucault's depiction remains ideal-typical, and (in Hans Aarsleff's view) neglects the concept that, more than resemblance, marked the dominant episteme of the sixteenth century—that of a perfect, divinely inspired language in which Adam named each created thing and captured its essence, and which scholars, despite the Flood and Babel, might still recover.[17] That Adam had written 'the Nature of things upon their Names' was a view popular throughout the next century too, together with attempts to identify the language he had used.[18] Above all, Foucault seriously underestimated the extent to which the natural and cultural accounts of signification had always been available as alternatives and continued to coexist during much of the seventeenth century. That a language made sense because of conventions that it should was defended not only throughout the Renaissance but in medieval scholarship too, in a debate going back to Plato's *CratylusP* Aristotle's view was that words were 'arbitrarily related to the things they signify and humanly instituted through conventional use'; he defined a noun as 'a sound significant by convention'.[20] According to Aquinas, 'words, in so far as they signify something, have no power except as derived from some intellect,—either of the speaker, or of the person to whom they are spoken: ... we make signs only to other intelligent beings.'[21] It is best, then, to think not of two consecutive monoliths separated by an almost total caesura (as Foucault does), but of two parallel theories of the sign between which natural philosophers chose according to taste. This, at least, was the situation until the long eighteenth century brought the domination of the representational paradigm.[22]

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[13] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 63 (author's emphasis).

[14] Ibid. 56.

[15] For a critical appraisal, see J. G. Merquior, *Foucault* (London, 1985), 35-75, esp. 56 ff.

[16] Martin Elsky, 'Bacon's Hieroglyphs and the Separation of Words and Things', *Philological Quart.* 63 (1984), 449-60; William B. Ashworth, Jr., 'Natural History and the Emblematic World View', in Lindberg and Westman (eds.), *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution*, 303-32; G. A. Padley, *Grammatical Theory in Western Europe, 1500-1700: The Latin Tradition* (Cambridge, 1976), 111-53; M. M. Slaughter, *Universal Languages and Scientific Taxonomy in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1982), *passim.*

[17] Hans Aarsleff, *From Locke to Saussure: Essays on the Study of Language and Intellectual History* (London, 1982), 22-6, 59, 281-4.

[18] David S. Katz, 'The Language of Adam in Seventeenth-Century England', in Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Valerie Pearl, and Blair Worden (eds.), *History and Imagination: Essays in Honour of H. R. Trevor-Roper* (London, 1981), 132-45 (quotation at 133 from a sermon of 1662 by Robert South).

In this altered perspective it can still be seen that the natural account of language and meaning received considerable attention in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from those whose Neoplatonism and Hermeticism encouraged them to see an equivalence between words and things. Pre-Saussureanism, on the other hand, drew emphatic support from many who associated themselves with the newer styles of scientific thought that gained momentum from the seventeenth century onwards. This has led Brian Vickers, too, to use the language issue as a criterion of epistemological, and hence natural philosophical, allegiance.[23] He sees in the doctrines of Reuchlin, Ficino, and Giovanni Pico a fusing of the sign and referent, and in the enthusiasts for cabbala, like Agrippa, a belief in the unique capacity of Hebrew to allow access to the secrets of natural things. In alchemy characters and symbols were collapsed into the substances they signified; in Paracelsian medicine microcosm and macrocosm were linked in reality and not just in metaphorical alliance. Everywhere in these philosophical circles there was a conflation of the literal with the figurative. The general

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*’ For the Renaissance and Plato's *Cratylus,* see Vickers, 'Analogy versus Identity', 95-163. For the early medieval discussions, see R. Howard Bloch, *Etymologies and Genealogies: A Literary Anthropology of the French Middle Ages* (London, 1983), 44-53, who speaks of'the easy copresence of what seem like mutually exclusive explanations of linguistic origin (natural versus conventional)' (p. 44). For early modern pedagogic views, see Dear, *Mersenne,* 179.

[20] Elsky, 'Bacon's Hieroglyphs', 452; Vickers, 'Analogy versus Identity', 101-2 (citing *De interpretatione,* 16a, 19).

[21] Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles,* 206-7.

[22] For studies of these two views of language in 17th-c. England, see Murray Cohen, *Sensible Words: Linguistic Practice in England 1640-1785* (London, 1977), 1-42; Margreta de Grazia, 'The Secularization ofLanguage in the Seventeenth Century', *J. Hist. Ideas,41* (1980), 319-29; Vivian Salmon, *The Worksof Francis Lodwick: A Study of his Writings in the Intellectual Climate of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1972), 87-98.

[21] Vickers, 'Analogy versus Identity', argues that the upholders of the natural account of language belonged to what he terms the 'occult' tradition in early modern natural philosophy, and those who thought of it in terms of arbitrariness and convention to a very different logical, rhetorical, and also 'scientific' or 'experimental' tradition. Criticisms of this stronger claim and its terminology have not extended to his initial identification of the debate about language and do not invalidate it; see, in particular, Curry, 'Revisions of Science and Magic', 299-325.

assumption was that, since words and other signs could contain the essences of things, manipulating them would produce concrete effects.

In devising a schematic summary of these beliefs in Ficino and in reactions to his writings, D. P. Walker also described the Neoplatonist conception of *vis verborum* in what I earlier called instrumental terms:

> This kind of verbal force rests on a theory of language according to which there is a real, not conventional, connection between words and what they denote, moreover the word is not merely like a quality of the thing it designates, such as its colour or weight, it is, or exactly represents, its essence or substance. A formula of words, therefore, maj not only be an adequate substitute for the things denoted, but may even be more powerful.

As in the anthropological cases, this instrumentality may well be combined with ordinary communication—that is to say, with rituals that rely on the rhetorical force of words. In the Ficinian tradition poetry and hymns were expressive and affective, as well as incantatory. Even so, language, and signs generally, were expected to work physically as well as psychologically, and on inanimate objects as well as on people.[24]

The rejection of these views was under way well before the end of the sixteenth century but the most forceful accounts of the cultural basis of signification occurred during the debates of the next age. They were given by men who, for a variety of reasons, espoused the cause of reform of natural philosophy. These include Bacon, Mersenne, Sennert, Van Helmont, Boyle, Hobbes, Wilkins, and Locke, a list that leads Vickers to conclude that what sustained this very different view of language was a commitment to experimentalism. Hobbes, for example, argued the classic case for the arbitrariness of names—they changed over time, they varied between different speech communities, and there was no sustained similarity between them and the things they stood for. Signifiers functioned because of an agreed relationship with signifieds, not because of any natural link with their referents: ‘that the sound of this word *stone* should be the sign of a stone, cannot be understood in any sense but this, that he that hears it collects that he that pronounces it thinks of a stone.’[25] Mersenne, like Hobbes, and indeed virtually everyone else in the early modern period, was prepared at first to tolerate the idea that God might have revealed to Adam a quite differently constituted language—one that was in conformity with the essence of things. But since then words had changed meaning and sinful mortals could obviously not repeat Adam’s feat. ‘Names’, therefore, ‘are of use to us only for meaning and signifying what we wish to say, and what we have in our minds.’ If a man lived alone he would have no need of them; there was no such thing as a private language. Phonetic resemblance was, of course, possible but not the perfect representation of our conceptions of things.[26] In Locke there was something of a culminating, and most

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” Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic,* 75-84 (quotation at 80-1). Walker also traces the Ficinian view of *vis verborum* in Jacques Gohory, Pontus de Tyard, and Fabio Paolini.

[25] Cited by Vickers, ‘Analogy versus Identity’, 103.

[24] Marin Mersenne, *La Kerite des sciences, contre les sfejeptiques (Pins,* 1625), 69-72 (quotation at 69); R. Lenoble, *Mersenneou la naissance dumecanisme* (Paris, 1943), 108,514-17; Dear, *Mersenne,* 179-85.

certainly influential, statement of these views. Vickers cites his description of the relationship between the concepts and the names of things as an ‘appropriated connexion’, without which the latter would be ‘but empty sounds’: ‘Words ... come to be made use of by Men, as the Signs of their Ideas; not by any natural connexion that there is between particular articulate Sounds and certain Ideas, for then there would be but one Language amongst all Men; but by a voluntary Imposition, whereby such a Word is made arbitrarily the Mark of such an Idea.’ It was as true for Adam as for any other speaker that signification was ‘by a perfectly arbitrary Imposition’. All that was needed for communication was that words should ‘excite in the Hearer exactly the same Idea they stand for in the Mind of the Speaker’. The particular demands of communication in natural philosophy were that men should by convention exchange absolutely clear and distinct meanings, not that they should expect these to arise directly from nature itself.[27]

It should not be thought that the language issue was important only at the level of secular, theoretical epistemology. Quite apart from the evangelical dimension already mentioned, other highly sensitive religious problems could arise from its unravelling. It is easy, for example, to see the implications for the nature of prayer of Pomponazzi’s explanation of the way ‘the magical power of words’ effected physical changes in those who used them as incantations; in his view, it was the conviction that they were efficacious that was itself efficacious. This brought into play the force of the imagination in responding to their meaning—their communicability—and producing the alterations that resulted—their instrumentality.[28] Apart from the general consequences for scientific enquiry that were entailed by different views about words and things, there were also some wholly practical matters to be considered. Sennert’s discussion of language arose in the context of a doubt about ‘whether there be any force in Words and Characters in Physick?’[29] This was the case with orthodox demonology too. All the arguments we are about to notice were related to attempts to identify the criminal (or, at least, sinful) aspects of magic and witchcraft by establishing the methods by which they were expected to work. Even so, it is difficult to resist asking the larger question concerning epistemological allegiance. In their account of language did believers in witchcraft share the view that signs were natural—the view that informed many serious discussions of signification in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries but which was soon to be rejected? Or did they argue that signs were conventional—a very old argument, certainly, but one newly emphasized from the seventeenth century onwards and at the heart ofcultural Modernism?

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[27] Vickers, ‘Analog)' versus Identity’, 110-14; on Locke, see esp. Aarsleff, *Locke to Saussure,* 24—31, 42-83. Proposals for a universal language (by Seth Ward, John Wilkins, and others), while also appealing to a kind of natural correspondence with things, were nevertheless committed to the conventional character of signification. The point was to create artificially a new sign-system that would exactly indicate the nature of the things that were denoted, instead of relying either on traditional language, or on the recovery of Adam’s. For this point, see R. F. Jones *et al., The Seventeenth Century: Studies in the History ofEnglish Thought and Literature from Bacon to Pope* (Stanford, Calif., 1951), 152-7.

[u] Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic,*107-8.

[29] Daniel Sennert, *Chymistry made easie and useful: or, the agreement and disagreement ofthe chymists and Galenists,* trans. Nicholas Culpeper and Abdiah Cole (London, 1662), 134.

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To a man they were on the side of the moderns. Signs could only have powers that were either intrinsic to their very nature or given to them for special reasons by God. But in themselves, it was universally agreed, they could only express meanings. ‘Characters, images and sigils’, declared Johann Georg Godelmann, ‘are nothing else but figures, delineations and traces *(umbrae)* of lettersand things, which are signs, and cannot do anything by themselves except figure, signify and represent, so that the image of Caesar holds nothing in itself but only that it represents Caesar.’ According to Thomas Erastus, ‘words have no more strength than the understanding in which they originate.’ Henri Boguet maintained likewise that ‘words have no other purpose than to denote the thing for which they were ordained and to express the passions of the soul and the affections of the spirit.’ Leonardo Vairo wrote that names were ‘only signs of our intentions’ and nothing could be done with them except to notify others of what was in our minds. For Valderrama, likewise, signs were the products of culture, not nature, and to give them natural efficacy was to commit a category error. In England, William Perkins stated that words had ‘nothing but a bare signification’ and were ‘invented onely to shew or signifie some thing’, and Alexander Roberts that ‘words have no vertue, but either to signifie and expresse the conceits of the minde, or to affect the eares of the Auditors, so that they can worke nothing but in these two respects.’ ‘What can words of themselves doe’, asked James Mason, ‘but onely signifie: neither can characters doe or effect any thing, but onely represent.’[30]

What, after all, was there in words that was naturally efficacious? Uttered aloud they were, as Perkins put it, ‘but sounds framed by the tongue, of the breath that commeth from the lungs. And that which is onely a bare sound, in all reason, can have no vertue in it to cause a reall worke’. Any action would have to result from contact between agent and patient, and this was impossible in the case of charms, whether they harmed or healed.[31] Words were, in effect, beatings of the air, explained Del Rio, and they were indistinguishable in their natural features from the sounds made by animals or by objects in percussion. When written down they were physically inert, and secondary powers derived from the constitution of the ink and paper had nothing to do with them.[32] If they did have any natural force, added Vairo, it would only be necessary to replicate the physical aspects of speech to take advantage of it; there would be no need for actual words to be uttered.[33] Besides (it was also said), if they

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M Godelmann, *Tractatus de magis,* bk. 1,93; Erastus, *Deux Dialogues,* 404; Boguet, *Examen of witches,* 79; Vairo, *Defascino,* 140; Valderrama, *Histoire generate,* bk. 3, 187; Perkins, *Discourse,* 136-7; Roberts, *Treatise of witchcraft, 69; W^son, Anatomic ofsorcerie,22.*

[31] Perkins, *Discourse,* 134,135; cf. Vairo, *Defascino,* 142-3.

“ Del Rio, *Disquisitionum magicarum,* 26; Del Rio’s view was recommended to inquisitors by Alberghini, *Manuale qualijicatorum sanctiss. Inquisitionis,* 144-5.

” Vairo, *Defascino,* 143: ‘Quod si expirationis materia peculiarem vim haberet, eadem sub quacunque artificiali materia possideret: ideo quibus verbis uterentur non referret, quin ne verbis quidem opus foret, sola enim efilatio satis esset?

acted on people and objects in a causal way, anyone uttering them on any occasion would always produce the same results, an outcome that was as obviously false to witchcraft authors as to anyone else in the period.[34]

For Catholics, God's arbitrary dispensations concerning words were, of course, nothing less than those miraculous efficacies that accompanied their pronouncement by privileged persons on sacramental occasions. In these ritual contexts, words did have a uniform, automatic, but, of course, supernatural power to bring about physical changes as well as the sanctification of souls; they were, we might say, performative utterances of a particularly pure kind. But these were only apparent exceptions to the rule, since sacramental efficacy, above all, could not rest on the power of the words themselves, only (as Vairo, for example, said) on an instrumentality that they acquired from heaven.[35] For Protestants, on the other hand, they were yet further infractions of the rule. God's word had a special spiritual efficacy for them which again could have nothing to do with natural efficacy: 'The power of Gods word commeth not from this, that it is a word, and barely uttered out of the mouth of a man: for so it is a dead letter: but it proceedeth from the powerfull operation of the spirit, annexed by Gods promise thereunto, when it is uttered, read, and conceived.'[36]

In order to break any supposedly natural connection between signs and their referents, witchcraft authors espoused the philosophy of language that was eventually to underpin the 'new science'. Perkins wrote that 'in regard of forme and articulation [words] are artificiall and significant, and the use of them in every language is, to signifie that which the author thereof intended; for the first significations of words, depended upon the will and pleasure of man that framed and invented them.'[37] The same was true, thought Mason, of any signifying 'character'; it was not a natural but a human artefact, formed according to the pleasure of its maker. If Hobbes could say that a name was merely 'a word taken at pleasure to serve for a mark' to recall a thought, Thomas Erastus could argue likewise that words were only 'marks and images of our thoughts, and in themselves do not have any property other than what they signify according to the common assent and intention of people.'[38] Catholic writers were of exactly the same view. Vairo (citing Aristotle) said that significations were imposed not by any natural necessity but through 'the agreement and pleasure of men'. Names were used arbitrarily, 'by art', and their very letters and syllables resulted from human choice.[39] Del Rio was similarly in agreement with Mersenne about God's original naming of things (via Adam) 'according to their natures', and the loss of this language to human beings, who thus had to rely on denominations that were 'purely arbitrary'.[40] It could be argued that God had only created the natural facilities needed to employ language, not its content, but this still led to the same doctrine of the arbitrariness of the sign: ‘words were devised by man afterward; for otherwise they would be the selfe same among all nations.’[41] This was also the conclusion of Pedro Ciruelo, who, in early sixteenth-century Spain, was expressing the sentiments of John Locke and asking confessors to pass them on to those who had sinned by practising magic and witchcraft:

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[34] See, for example, Martin Plantsch, *Opusculum de sagis maleficis* (1507), cited by Oberman, *Masters of the Reformation,* 170; Dupleix, *Troisieme Partie de la metaphysique,* 185; Boguet, *Examen of witches,* 79.

[35] Vairo, *Defascino,* 147, see also 145-7.

[34] Perkins, *Discourse,* 144-5.

[37] Ibid. 136-7.

[31] Vickers, 'Analogy versus Identity', 103; Erastus, *Deux Dialogues,* 421; id., *Disputationum de medicina nova,* 206; commentary on Erastus in Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic,* 156-66.

[39] Vairo, *Defascino,* 138, 139-40.

[40] Del Rio, *Disquisitionum magicarum,* 26-7.

> The meaning of words in any language is willingly assigned to them by the men who speak that language. [They] signify nothing except those things which men who speak the language wish to designate by them. And it is the same with other languages. If, then, the meaning of either spoken or written words is a matter of choice and not of innate quality, one cannot find in the meaning some natural power to create some natural effect in mankind, cither to cure or hurt them.[42]

A century later, in Protestant Wittenberg, Balduin was also insisting that words were signs of things but not because they had any natural power over them. Words and things were different in kind. The first were only sounds made by beating the air, or characters written on paper, and they signified only arbitrarily *(voluntate)* and by convention *(ex consuetudine)***

A saying, then (as Oberman reports Martin Plantsch preaching), was just that: something said.[44] If any effects that resulted from its utterance could neither be natural nor (except in privileged instances) supernatural, they must, according to the usual grid of causation, be preternatural. Humans, it was agreed, could not produce them, and angels would not, leaving demons as the agents responsible for the magical power of signs. ‘Certainly’, wrote the philosopher Henry More, ‘one may charm long enough, even till his Heart ake, e’re he make one Serpent assemble near him, unless helpt by this confederacy of Spirits that drive them to the Charmer.’[45] What words signified in this context was the existence of an at least implicit pact between their user and the devil; they were, indeed, along with all the other symbolic paraphernalia of magic and witchcraft, the devil’s equivalent of the sacraments.[46] They became signs of another sort, or, in modern terms, *only* signs. A charm, in Perkins’s definition, was ‘a signe or watchword to the devil, to cause him to worke wonders’.[47] Its overt unintelligibility was, of course, a betrayal of this. For the charmer, who thought of success as a natural consequence of speech, any gibberish might do. But, however meaningless to him or to others, gibberish was understood by demons.[48] Denouncers of magic and witchcraft, like modern anthropologists in foreign lands, were evidently aware of the sorts of doubts voiced by Stanley Tambiah.

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[41] Mason, */inatomie of sorcerie,* 22-3.

[42] Ciruelo, Trrame, 334; for the lack ofany natural powers in words, cf. Castafiega *Tratado*, 310.

[41] Balduin, *Tractatus,* 543.

« Oberman, *Masters of the Reformation,* 170.

“ ‘Dr H.M. his letter, with the postscript, to Mr J.G.’, in Glanvill, *Sadueismus triumphatus* 33

« Binsfeld, *Traetatus,* 43-4; Denoist, *Petit fragment catechittic,* 15; Hemmingsen, *Admonitio,* sigs. B7'-C1', cf. L4’; Godelmann, *Traetatus de magis,* bk. 1, 91; Bernard, *Guide to grand-iurv men* 171-2; Vairo, *De fascino,* 147,153-4; Zanchy, ‘De operibus Dei’, col. 202.

[47] Perkins, *Discourse,* 130, see also 138.

[41] Balduin, *Traetatus,* 543.

It is not a question of anachronistically recruiting the experts on demonology for some philosophical cause. The Thomism of many of them meant that they were only drawing out the implications of Aquinas's statement that words that signify can only possess a semantic power. The magician's words (he had continued) signified something; they were couched as speech acts—'*invocations, supplications, adjurations,* or even *commands'*—and the addressee was that supremely intelligent being, the devil.[49] Nevertheless, on this particular issue, although dealing generally with matters now thought to be incompatible with science, witchcraft writers were handling them in a manner consistent with contemporary scientific values. The notion that there was power in the 'very words and letters of ordinary charms' was, according to one of them, 'against the very principles of Natural Philosophy'.[50] They were situating themselves in what Aarsleff calls 'the lively seventeenth-century debate about words and things, language and mind, and ultimately language and knowledge'. They did this by cutting themselves off from Adamicism, in his view 'the most widely held seventeenth-century view of the nature of language',[51] and by attributing the 'magical' use of signs to authors associated with Neoplatonism and the 'Hermetic' philosophy—Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Paracelsus, and Agrippa were singled out. They would have agreed, to invoke Bacon again, with the view that the confusion of words and things was an 'idol' in the way of proper understanding.[52] We arrive at a situation where those who believed in the reality of witchcraft helped to sustain the knowledge system to which the fortunes of the 'new science' were epistemologically tied. It was left to a eZAbeliever, John Webster, to defend the idea that if

> fit and agreeable words or characters be framed and joined together, when the Heavens are in a convenient site and configuration for the purpose intended, those words and characters will receive a most powerful virtue, for the purpose intended, and will effectually operate to those ends by a just, lawful and natural agency.[51]

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*’ Aquinas, *Sumina contra Gentiles,* 207 (emphasis in original).

[50] Casaubon, *Treatise proving spirits, witches and supernatural operations,* 131.

[51] Aarsleff, *Locke to Saussure,* 42,25.

[52] Bacon, Afovumorganum, in JKorirr, iv. 62—3.

” Webster, *Displaying,* 341. Nigel Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion 16-10-1660* (Oxford, 1989), 288, says that, for Webster, 'perfection would be achieved when all spoke a language which was universal, original, pre-Hebraic, natural, and transcendent, in that it would be above fallen human languages.' Cf. Slaughter, *Universal Languages,* 135-7.

19

Witchcraft and the Scientific Revolution

> Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.
>
> (Daniel 12:4)

> I have long been no stranger to sound, experimental, and mathematical Philosophy myself; yet do I know of no solid objections from such Philosophy against that I have here advanced, but rather what favours the same.
>
> (William Whiston, z/n *account ofthe daemoniacks, and ofthe power ofcasting out daemons)*

'JAMES [I] wrote a treatise on witches, and was no more credulous than most of his subjects', but (continued Christopher Hill in 1961) 'by 1714 fairies, witches, astrology, and alchemy were no longer taken seriously by educated men.' Ten years after Hill, Keith Thomas allowed for the continuance of witchcraft beliefs at the popular level, where allegations and accusations continued long after they could be taken up by the courts. But he too argued that, among intellectuals and the educated classes generally, a 'revolution in opinion about witchcraft' had taken place by the early eighteenth century. Long before the repeal of the witchcraft legislation in 1736 the crime itself had come to be thought of as an impossibility. For both historians, the most important reason for the change lay in developments in the fields of science and philosophy. Hill spoke of the triumph of 'modern science' in the later seventeenth century, and wrote: 'The majestic laws of Newton made nonsense of the traditional idea that the earth was the centre of the universe in which God and the Devil intervened continuously. ... Witches and parsons, so powerful in 1603, counted for little in the world of rationalism, materialism, science, toleration.' In what has become the standard account, Thomas suggested that the real damage to witchcraft beliefs was done by new philosophical and scientific arguments about the workings of nature. There had, after all, always been a strand of scepticism about the reality of witchcraft in English culture. And there were also growing doubts about whether secure convictions could be arrived at from the evidence for witchcraft brought before judges and juries. But neither of these things was decisive. The old scepticism was theological and 'fundamentalist' in its focus and dealt mainly with the difficulty of finding biblical evidence for witchcraft. And the legal difficulties did not threaten the existence of witchcraft in principle, only the reliability of proof in individual instances. What was much more important, argued Thomas—and important for the decline of magical beliefs in general—was 'the scientific and philosophical revolution of the seventeenth century'.[1]

The essence of this intellectual revolution was 'the triumph of the mechanical philosophy', a philosophy of which Henry More, for example, wrote: 'I believe indeed most of us ... conceive, that Generation, Corruption, Alteration, and all the Vicissitudes of corporeal Nature are nothing else but Unions and Dissolutions (I will add also the Formations and Deformations) of little Bodies or Particles of differing Figures, Magnitudes, and Velocities.'[1] [2] This view appeared to preclude such a thing as incorporeal substance and, while allowing that there might be incorporeal spirits (like demons), to deny them (on the grounds of their very incorporeality) any role in the natural world and, thus, any collusion with witches. The behaviour of matter in motion was governed, it seemed, by immutable laws, such that the workings of nature were regular, indeed, 'mechanical', and this too ruled out the capricious intervention of demons. Experimental observations led Robert Hooke, for example, to suspect 'that those effects of Bodies, which have been commonly attributed to Qualities, and those confess'd to be occult, are perform'd by the small Machines of Nature ... seeming the meer products of Motion, Figure, and Magnitude.'[3] The epistemology of the new science likewise weakened the belief in witchcraft. There was a new confidence that, in principle at least, purely natural causes could now be found for all puzzling phenomena. And, in England in particular, it was increasingly required that knowledge of nature and matter of fact should be the product of direct experience—that it should be 'experimental' in the later seventeenth-century sense of the term.

This modern account of the decline of witchcraft beliefs among intellectuals certainly had some contemporary parallels. The Boyle lecturer Richard Bentley asked, 'What then has lessen'd in England your stories of sorceries?' answering, 'Not the growing sect [of free-thinkers], but the growth of Philosophy and Medicine. No thanks to atheists but to the Royal Society and College of Physicians; to the Boyles and Newtons, the Sydenhams and Ratcliffs.'[4] In 1677, the thoroughgoing sceptic John Webster praised the 'discoveries of those learned and indefatigable persons that are of the Royal Society' for helping to combat the 'gross and absurd opinion of the power of Witches'?

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[1] Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution,* 5th imp. (London, 1964), 3—4,312; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 570-83, 643; for a similar version of events, see Barbara J. Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century*[1] *England* (Princeton, 1983), 196-7,220-1,225-6; KJaits, *Servants of Satan,* 162; Attfield, 'Balthasar Bekker and the Decline of the Witch-Craze', 392-5.1 prefer the different perspective adopted by Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton,* 75-100, esp. 88 ff., and by Allison Coudert, 'Henry More and Witchcraft', in Sarah Hutton (ed.), *Henry More (1614-1687): Tercentenary Studies* (London, 1989), 115-36. The fortunes of astrology in the same period present comparable problems of interpretation; for recent approaches to the history of astrology that parallel my account of demonology', see Michael Hunter, 'Science and Astrology in Seventeenth-Century' England: An Unpublished Polemic by John Flamsteed', in Patrick Curry (ed.), *Astrology, Science and Society: Historical Essays* (Woodbridge, 1987), 261-300, esp. 281-6.

[2] Letter from More to Joseph Glanvill cited in Glanvill, *A praefatory answer to Mr. Henry Stubbe* (London, 1671), 156, where More goes on to say that he thinks of this as more like 'the old Pythagorick or Mosaick Philosophy'. Fearing the atheistical implications of the further idea that 'Matter having such a Quantity of Motion as it has, would contrive it selfe into all those Phaenomena we see in Nature' (p. 155), More recommended not the mechanical, but the experimental philosophy to the Royal Society.

[2] Cited in Michael Hunter and Simon Schaffer (eds.), *Robert Hooke: New Studies* (Woodbridge, 1989), introduction, 18.

There was, and for a long time there remained, something comforting about this sort of explanation, with its reassuring story of the victory of science over magic, of reason over ignorance, and, in the sphere of demonology itself, of scepticism over belief. But everything that has been said in the preceding chapters of this section—and a great deal in the recent historiography of the 'scientific revolution'—has been aimed at the destruction of these misleading oppositions. The concept of natural magic—on which both demonology *and* much of the new science were predicated—alone invalidates the first of them. Moreover, this explanation of intellectual change is not at all convincing if we take an overall view of the establishment of the mechanical philosophy in later seventeenth-century England, and it does not work, in particular, for the thirty-year period when both the new science and the Royal Society were establishing themselves in conditions that precluded institutionalized unanimity of opinion.[6] In these years, men who were undoubtedly leading exponents of the new styles of natural philosophy, who championed the Royal Society, and were, some of them, fellows of it, went out of their way to insist on the reality of witchcraft and the importance of demonic activity in the natural world. On the other hand, neither of the leading critics of witchcraft beliefs who went into print in this period—John Webster and John Wagstaffe—were 'new scientists', even if Webster's *Displaying of supposed witchcraft* enjoyed the Royal Society's imprimatur. Arguably the most powerful of all sceptical treatments of witchcraft was still Reginald Scot's—reissued in 1651, 1654, and 1665 but originally published in 1584, and steeped in theological, rather than natural scientific, unorthodoxies.

The story of the 'scientific' demonology of Restoration England has often been told—invariably in terms of paradox or illogicality.[7] The central figure was Joseph Glanvill, staunchly Anglican clergyman, fellow of the Royal Society in 1664 and, like Thomas Sprat, one of its key apologists. He was a keen exponent of experimentalism, had the critical and sceptical mentality that was scientifically fashionable, and con-

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• Cited, with other examples, by Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 579 n. 3. Cf. Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton,* 99, Cor the suggestion that views like Bentley's may not have coincided with informed contemporary opinion.

[5] Webster, *Displaying,* 268.

' For the eclecticism and lack of uniformity of views in these decades, see Michael Hunter, *Establishing the Neu> Science,* 28; id., *Science and Society in Restoration England* (Cambridge, 1981) 13-21.

' Jackson I. *Cope, Joseph Glanvill: Anglican Apologist* (St Louis, 1956), 62-5,91-103* Garfield Tourney, 'The Physician and Witchcraft in Restoration England', *Medical Hist.* 14 (1972) 143-55 (a superficial account, that uses the category of'superstition' to describe natural philosophical and medical beliefs); Irving Kirsch, 'Demonology and Science during the Scientific Revolution', *J. Hist. Behavioural Sciences,* 16 (1980), 359-68; Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton,* 92-6; A. Rupert Hall, *Henry More: Magic Religion and Experiment* (Oxford, 1990), 137-45 (including More's illogicality and the polluting of his thought with the 'mire of witchcraft trials*).

ducted enthusiastic defences of the new approach to nature in the spirit of Bacon. In 1668, via William Lord Brcreton, he invited the Royal Society to take up the investigation of demons and witches (what he called ‘a kinde of America’[8]), arguing that this could be conducted like any other branch of the new science. He suggested as a first step the compiling of a Baconian natural history of spirits and, having worked on the project himself, published parts of it in 1666 and 1668. When he died in 1680 it was still unfinished, but it was assembled, with other relevant researches, by an editor and published in 1681 with the title *Saducismtis triumphatus: or, Full and plain evidence concerning witches and apparitions.*[9]

The editor was the theologian and Cambridge Platonist Henry More, also a fellow of the Royal Society. More believed that men and women could ‘make Leagues or Covenants’ with wicked spirits and had himself written a defence of the reality of witchcraft in 1653, stating that he was treating the subject ‘in the plaine shape of a meere Naturalist’.[10] The material that he added to Glanvill’s natural history of witches came, in addition, from the physician and neurologist Thomas Willis, a founder member of the Royal Society (and of the Oxford meetings that preceded it); from Robert Plot, the antiquary and natural historian, who was a fellow of the Society from 1677, its secretary from 1682 to 1684, and editor of its *Philosophical Transactions;* and from George Sinclair, a Scottish new scientist who was professor of philosophy and mathematics at Glasgow in the 1650s and again in the 1690s, and author of *Satan's invisible world discovered* (1685).[I] [11] But the most illustrious of Glanvill’s collaborators in witchcraft research was Robert Boyle, likewise a leading founder of the Royal Society. He and Glanvill corresponded on the question of the reality of witchcraft, with Boyle encouraging Glanvill to think of it as a proper subject for science. As the one fully corroborated and verified account of demonic activity that would clinch the matter, Boyle chose the story of the devil of Mâcon in France, originally compiled by Francois Perrault. He sponsored the first of its many publications in England in 1658, and sent it to Glanvill for inclusion in his project.[12]

What are we to make of this apparent contradiction? One response is to say that after 1660 the learned belief in witchcraft was really a leftover from earlier times, and that it lingered on as an outmoded idea only because men like Glanvill, More, and Boyle, unable to see the full implications of the latest intellectual developments, made ‘last-ditch attempts ... to place the ancient belief in witchcraft upon a genuinely scientific foundation’.[13] Yet, in addition to assuming that witchcraft beliefs had

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[I] [Glanvill], *Blow at modern sadducism,* 93.

[’] I have used the 3rd edn. of 1689, pub. in London (facsimile repr., ed. Coleman O. Parsons, Gainesville, Fla., 1966).

[10] ‘Dr H.M. his Letter, with the postscript, to Mr J.G.*, in *Saducismus triumphatus,* 26; More, *Antidote against atheism,* sig. B4r.

[II] John Wilkins, Edward Reynolds, and Ralph Cudworth also had some involvement with the project; *Webster, Paracelsus to Newton, 93-A.*

[12] E. Labroussc, ‘Le Demon de Macon*, in *Scienze, credenze occulte, liveltidi cuttura,* 257,265-75.

[12] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 577; cf. Prior, ‘Joseph Glanvill, Witchcraft, and Seventeenth-Century Science’, 180-1.

not previously enjoyed a proper scientific grounding, this suggests that their disappearance was virtually assured as soon as the mechanical philosophy was taken up seriously by intellectuals. Until relatively recently, this was the view held by many historians of science. As I remarked at the outset of these chapters, they assumed that seventeenth-century demonology was somehow inimical to scientific progress—that it made sense only in terms of sterile Aristotelianism and was quickly left behind by the scientifically more adventurous.

Witchcraft beliefs did, however, have a ‘genuinely scientific foundation’ in the old natural philosophy—that is to say, they rested on views about demonic agency in nature accepted as genuinely scientific by the far from sterile Aristotelians who defended them. And they continued to be highly relevant to the fortunes of the new natural philosophy, at least in its early years of acceptance in England. Nor was this a question of those involved missing the point about mechanism; on the contrary, the more mechanism was insisted upon, the greater their insistence that spirit testimony be made consistent with it. This is because the ‘mechanical’ conception of nature was neither as powerful a rival to the old science nor as radically different from it as was once argued. It thus becomes impossible (at least in English conditions) to distinguish neatly between a traditional Christian Aristotelianism that sustained demons and witches, and a new mechanism that did not. Earlier, it proved difficult for us to separate demonological orthodoxy based on Aristotelianism from sceptical challenges based on natural magic. The same is true of belief and scepticism in later seventeenth-century England—they cannot be neatly correlated with supposedly clear-cut natural philosophical allegiances.[14]

To begin with, mechanism in England was tied closely to religious and political interests that urgently needed a culturally respectable and epistemologically secure endorsement of immateriality. Despite appearances, it was also thought to require the existence in nature of causes of the demonic type—that is to say, occult causes—and it continued to rely on a view of natural causation that allowed for them. The lack of a doctrine of modern miracles meant that ‘the imperative for a stable and regular nature was that much less’ than in a Catholic culture like that of France; devils could still be allowed to intrude themselves into nature’s workings.[15] Even strict empiricism could be reconciled, via notions of reliable testimony to matters of fact, to the collecting of evidence about witches. It therefore looks as though Glanvill and his Royal Society colleagues were interested in witchcraft because they were enthusiasts for the new philosophy, not despite this. And if this is the case, there is no contradiction between their interests after all.[16] The episode provides further illustration, then, of the affinities, not the disparities, between demonology and particular natural philosophical practices—as well as a résumé of many of the specific themes that I have been confronting. Above all, the subject of witchcraft was continuing to act as a

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[14] A point made effectively by Coudert, ‘Henry More and Witchcraft’, 117-18,131-2.

[15] Dear, ‘Miracles, Experiments, and the Ordinary Course of Nature’, 674-5.

[16] Prior, ‘Joseph Glanvill, Witchcraft, and Seventeenth-Century Science’, 193, established this in the 1930s, and it has recently been reaffirmed by Coudert, ‘Henry More and Witchcraft’, 116

‘prerogative instance’ in Restoration science, irrespective of whether those who investigated it were ‘believers’ or ‘sceptics’. Like experiments with air-pumps or episodes of miraculous healing, it was an *instantia crttcis* that enabled intellectuals to sort out and contest major philosophical and, with them, social issues. Its testimony was, as suggested by Simon Schaffer, most like a commodity or resource that writers fought over for disciplinary ends.[17]

This situation continued as long as natural philosophy was tied (as Peter Heimann and others have argued[18]) to a theology of nominalism and voluntarism that, while it justified the law-like regularity of natural occurrences, also required the energy of providentially inspired activity in the natural world. When natural theology' was replaced by rational theology—and theism by deism—it became unnecessary to impose causal activity on passive matter or find spirit testimony to illustrate this. Activity was now conceived to be inherent in matter and immanent in the natural order, with a remoter God being allotted perfect foresight and omniscience to compensate for his loss of complete power and will. This was a much more significant discontinuity in the history of natural philosophy than the one previously identified in the period from Boyle to Newton—the one on which the historiography of the decline of demonology has hitherto been premissed. This latter, if anything, pointed backwards to the preoccupations of later medieval theologians, above all, their distinction between ordinary (ordained) and extraordinary (absolute) divine power, rather than forwards to the eighteenth century.*[9]

Thus demonology continued to play a role in science because it contributed to the alliance ‘between one form of philosophy and one form of religion [that] was a dominant feature of late seventeenth century thought’.[20] It ceased to be relevant to knowledge of nature because of changes in theological sensibilities—which took place from about the 1740s onwards, allowing the breakup of this alliance—not because it was argued out of existence in the early phases of a ‘scientific revolution’. What had been knowable in one paradigm of natural activity ceased to be knowable in the paradigm that replaced it. But this was not a matter of direct empirical confrontation, which is, in any case, rare in scientific revolutions in the post-Kuhnian mould.

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[17] **Simon Schaffer, ‘Making Certain’, *Social Stud, of Science,* 14 (1984), 147 (following Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton).***

[11] **P. M. Heimann, ‘Voluntarism and Immanence: Conceptions of Nature in Eighteenth-Century Thought’, *J. Hist. Ideas, V)* (1978), 271-83; cf. J. E. McGuire and P. M. Heimann, ‘The Rejection of Newton’s Concept of Matter in the Eighteenth Century’, in Eman McMullin (cd.), *The Concept ofMatter in Modem Philosophy,* rev. edn. (London, 1978), 104—18; Heimann,‘Scientific Revolutions ’, *New Cambridge Modern History,* xiii. 256-62; C. B. Wilde, ‘Matter and Spirit as Natural Symbols in Eighteenth-Century British Natural Philosophy’, *British J. Hist. Science,* 15 (1982), 99—131. James R. Jacob and Margaret C. Jacob, ‘The Anglican Origins of Modern Science: The Metaphysical Foundations of the Whig Constitution’, *his,* 71 (1980), 251-67, establish a similar discontinuity between a ‘Newtonian’ and a‘Radical’Enlightenment (see esp. p. 265).**

w Francis Oakley, ‘Christian Theology and the Newtonian Science: The Rise of the Concept of the Laws of Nature’, *Church Hist.* 30 (1961), 433-57; id., *Omnipotence, Covenant, and Order* (Ithaca, NY, 1984), 67-92.

“ Schaffer, ‘Occultism and Reason’, 121.

The politics of immateriality, and, hence, of demonology, after the Restoration is, again, a now familiar subject.[21] In the aftermath of the Civil Wars and Interregnum and in the culturally eclectic conditions of the 1660s, 1670s, and 1680s, intellectuals like Glanvill, More, and Boyle sought to develop a natural philosophy that would protect traditional Anglican theology, and the orthodoxies that went with it. The two threats they feared, above all, were from what they saw as atheism and subversive sectarian enthusiasm; in other words, they wanted a natural theology that would be effective against both Hobbes and the Quakers. Specifically, they wanted knowledge that would demonstrate the real power of God not only as the original creator of the natural order but as the providential supplier of some of nature's most crucial effects in the present. This would prevent God being dispensed with altogether, as in the case of Hobbes's radically materialistic philosophy, or dispersed throughout the world, as in the pantheism and immanentalism of the radical sects. At the same time, this natural theology had to be empirical. It had to be accessible to the senses and capable of being experimentally verified. Glanvill and his collaborators were disciples of Bacon and members of the very Baconian Royal Society, and they were committed to the experiment—properly conducted, witnessed, and reported—as the only way of producing accurate and ideologically safe knowledge.

A modified form of mechanism could provide all this, not despite, but because of its view of matter as inert and without any self-activating purpose or consciousness. For although strict Cartesians paid little attention to the spiritual and immaterial—to God, angels, and demons—mechanical natural philosophy was not necessarily atheistic. Indeed, in crucial respects, it was what Keith Hutchison has called a 'radically supernaturalist' philosophy. Precisely because it reduced matter to complete passivity, it could not offer a materialistic account of some very obvious things, including the origin of matter, the original imposition of motion on matter, and, above all, the workings of the human mind itself, which patently was purposive and conscious and must therefore be immaterial, immortal, and owing both its creation and its activity to God. In other words, the mechanical philosophy entailed theological truths about God's constant participation in the universe, about the creation, and about the immortality of the soul. These were the necessary consequences of its ontology and not just apologetic afterthoughts. The more passive matter became, the more the divine activity that had to be allowed for; the best possible evidence of spirit was the most barren conception of matter. '[Since] all local motion ... is adventitious to matter... ,' wrote Boyle, 'and is... every moment continued and preserved by God [, it] may be inferred that he concurs to the actions of each particular [physical] agent ... and ... that his providence reaches to all and every one of them.' The Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth said similarly of atomistic physics that by accepting it philosophers committed themselves necessarily to the existence of incorporeal substance too. It was as certain as anything in geometry, he declared, that 'Cogitation and Understanding, can never possibly Result out of Magnitudes, Figures, Sites, and Locall Motions, (which is all that ourselves can allow to Body) however compounded together. Hutchison even argues that the mechanical philosophy was more supernaturalistic than the traditional scholastic natural philosophy that it replaced—and that it developed in reaction to it. For in scholasticism, matter itself was more active, more animated, and divine intervention was therefore rare and miraculous. This is why some radical Aristotelians, like Pomponazzi, were even able to deny supernatural intervention in nature altogether and explain miracles away in radically naturalistic and thus atheistic terms. It was impossible to do this with the metaphysics of a pure mechanist like Descartes; hence the mechanical philosophy's attraction to those who wished to protect theological orthodoxy in Restoration England. 'The new philosophy', concludes Hutchison, 'was routinely involving supernatural agencies in apparently natural events.'[22]

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[21] For what follows I rely esp. on Jobe, 'The Devil in Restoration Science', 343-56- Schaffer, 'Occultism and Reason', 117—43; Coudert, 'Henry More and Witchcraft', 115-36 (who makes important changes to Jobe's argument). There is an older but still useful account in Prior, 'Toseoh Glanvill Witchcraft, and Seventeenth-Century Science', 167-93. P vwnviu, wi

The problem with undiluted mechanism was, of course, that, although it required spirit as well as matter, supernature as well as nature, it expressed the relationship between these in notoriously dualistic terms. This enabled Descartes to park theological issues on one side and concentrate entirely on the behaviour of matter in motion; he 'defined a Spirit (such as the humane Soul)', complained Henry More, 'by Cogitation only, Matter by Extension, and divided all Substance into Cogitant and Extended, as into their first species or kinds.'[23] It also enabled conservative critics of the new natural philosophical practices to argue that mechanism was itself atheistic in its implications. The task for those who wished to bring theology and natural philosophy together, then, was to show by the (social, as well as intellectual) security of experiment how spirit and matter, supernature and nature, interacted, and how physical events might, in consequence, have non-material or non-corporeal causes. The boundaries of pure mechanism, it has been said, were being 'constantly renegotiated'.[24]

There was more than one route to this destination, and more than one type of 'prerogative instance' to demonstrate it. According to the old argument from design, greatly strengthened by the very orderliness of the 'mechanical' world, it was thought impossible that 'meer blind unguided Matter should shuffle it self into such regular and accurate Productions as we see are the Results of every day without the Manuduction of some Knowing Agent and Contriver'.[25] As far as the more precise

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[22] This is a brief summary of a complex argument containing many other illustrations and of great importance for the history of witchcraft beliefs; see Keith Hutchison, 'Supernaturalism and the Mechanical Philosophy', *Hist. Science,* 21 (1983), 297-333, quotation at 326 (Boyle quotation at 299; Cudworth at 321). For another version of the limitations of mechanical explanations, see Nina Rattner Gelbart, 'The Intellectual Development of Walter Charleton', z/mAix, 18 (1971), 160-3,166-7; on Boyle's providentialism, seej. E. McGuire, 'Boyle's Conception of Nature', *J. Hist. Ideas,* 33 (1972), 523-42.

[21] Henry More, 'The true notion of a spirit' in Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus,* 146.

[24] Schaffer,'Occultism and Reason', 131.

[21] 'Reflections on drollery and atheism', in Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus,* 543; cf. [id.], *Blom at modern sadducism,* 157.

workings of providence were concerned, Ralph Cudworth suggested that between God and nature there was an intervening medium, which he called 'Plastik Nature', that superimposed activity on barren matter on God's behalf. Henry More spoke in similar terms of a 'Spirit of Nature' (attracting criticism from those who felt this to be an uninvestigable entity), and adopted aspects of Cabbalism in the hope of demonstrating the extension of spiritual substances. It seems that Boyle's 'providential corpuscularianism' owed much to Gassendi's 'baptized' version of the Epicurean philosophy, as well as to traditional voluntarism and nominalism.[26] For Newton it was alchemy that, likewise, provided evidence of an active, animating spirit 'that kept the universe from being the sort of closed mechanical system for which Descartes had argued'.[27]

Above all, it was in the field of pneumatics that scholars, from the 1670s onwards, sought to demonstrate the role of spiritual efficient causes in the material world. Experiments with the properties of air—involving such phenomena as spring (elasticity), combustion, and respiration—showed the physical effects of vital spirits that were believed to be situated in a range of subtle fluids distributed throughout nature. During this period Boyle, for example, wrote that the most important effects in medicine and natural philosophy could be traced, in part, to 'a very agile and invisible sort of fluids, called spirits, vital and animal'. The structure of the human soul was brought within the same model of natural action, and the vitality that underlay material transactions was ultimately traced to the deity. Thus the most highly sensitive theological and social issues of the period were tackled according to the new conventions and disciplines of experimental management. Spirit and soul came to preoccupy the key philosophers of this period, for the cultural reasons already indicated. By 1700, it has been claimed, showing how active principles worked in matter 'was the dominant form of English natural philosophy'.[28]

But demons and witches, too, were highly relevant to these attempts to make the mechanical philosophy both acceptable to religious orthodoxy and invincible against religious deviance. Their activities, properly testified, could also provide important empirical proof of the existence of immaterial activity in nature. 'Phenomena attributed to witchcraft,' writes Thomas Jobe, 'provided the experiments in nature to which More and Glanvill could turn to elucidate their notions of the interaction between spirit and matter?[29] More himself spoke of 'Experiments made by us of the Royal Society, that do not only plausibly invite us to, but afford us most forcible and evident Demonstrations for the Belief of the Existence of immaterial Beings'.[30] In his treatise on the immortality of the soul he wrote of apparitions that

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[26] **Hutchison, 'Supernaturalism', 322; John Henry, 'Occult Qualities and the Experimental Philosophy: Active Principles in Pre-Newtonian Matter Theory', *Hist. Science,* 24 (1986), 355; Allison P. Coudert, 'Henry More, the Kabbalah, and the Quakers', in Kroll *et al.* (eds.), *Philosophy, Science, and Religion,* 35; Osler, 'The Intellectual Sources of Robert Boyle's Philosophy of Nature, ibid. 178-98. See also Alan Gabbey, 'Cudworth, More and the Mechanical Analogy', ibid. 111, and id., 'Henry More and the Limits of Mechanism', in Hutton (ed.), *Henry More,* 19—35. For the differences between More and Boyle in this area, see John Henry, 'Henry More versus Robert Boyle: The Spirit of Nature and the Nature of Providence', ibid. 55-76.**

[27] **Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *The Janus Faces of Genius: The Role of Alchemy in Newton's Thought* (Cambridge, 1991), 5 and *passim*; cf. ead., 'Newton's Alchemy and his Theory of Matter', *Isis,* 73 (1982), 511—28.**

[28] **Schaffer, 'Godly Men and Mechanical Philosophers', 55-85 (quotation at 73; Boyle at 64); cf. id., 'Occultism and Reason', 117^43, esp. 117 ('the realm of spirit was crucial in making possible a philosophy of nature'); Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump, passim,* esp. 283-331; D. P. Walker, 'Medical Spirits in Philosophy and Theology from Ficino to Newton', in *Arts du spectacle et histoire des idées: Recueil offert en hommage à Jean Jacquot* (Tours, 1984), 293-7.**

> The Third and last ground which I would make use of, for evincing the Existence of Incorporeall Substances, is such extraordinary effects as we cannot well imagine any naturall, but must needs conceive some free or spontaneous Agent to be the Cause thereof, when as yet it is clear that they are from neither Man nor Beast. Such are speakings, knockings, opening of doores when they were fast shut, sudden lights in the midst of a room floating in the aire, and then passing and vanishing; nay, shapes of Men and severall sorts of Brutes, that after speech and converse have suddainly disappeared?[1]

Moreover, those against whom the new philosophy in England was principally directed, Hobbes and the sectarian enthusiasts, were among those suspected of doubting the existence of witchcraft and the physical reality of demons. And their scepticism on these matters was regarded as directly related to their atheism. Voicing an early modern commonplace, one whose implications were growing more, not less, urgent, Glanvill wrote: 'Atheism is begun in Saducism: And those that dare not bluntly say, There is no God, content themselves (for a fair step and Introduction) to deny there are Spirits or Witches.'[32] Henry More was epigramatic: 'assuredly that Saying was nothing so true in Politicks, No Bishop, no King; as this is in Metaphysicks, No Spirit, no God.'[33]

Giving the existence of witchcraft scientific credibility was an additional guarantee, therefore, that a modified mechanical philosophy could be used successfully to underwrite Anglican theology, thus demonstrating the Royal Society's religious and social orthodoxy.[34] Witchcraft showed 'Hobbians and Spinozians' that there were 'other intelligent Beings besides those that are clad in heavy Earth or Clay', and more to human conceptions than 'the thrusting of one part of matter against another'.[35] There was, for example, no reason in nature or philosophy to deny that demonic spirits could act on the air to produce apparitions, just as 'Men here upon the Earth work upon the parts thereof, as also upon the neighbouring Elements so farre as they can reach, shaping, perfecting, and directing things, according to their own purpose

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” Jobe, 'Devil in Restoration Science', 345. M Cited in Glanvill, *Praefatory answer*, 157-8.

[11] Henry More, *The immortality of the soul* (London, 1659), 89-90.

[12] Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus,* 62; cf. id., *Some philosophical considerations touching the being of witches and witchcraft* (London, 1667), 4.

“ More, *Antidote against atheism,* 164; Coudert, 'Henry More and Witchcraft', 118-21.

[14] Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton*, 100.

JJ Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus,* 26 ('Dr H.M. his Letter, with the postscript, to Mr J.G.'), 69; Cf. [Glanvill], *Blow at modern sadducism,* 153, against the view that there was 'no being in the world, but matter, and the results of motion'; Robert Boyle, 'The Excellency of Theology', in *The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle,* ed. Thomas Birch, 2nd edn. (6 vols.; London, 1772), iv. 19—20, on the 'four grand communities of creatures' (including demons) in the universe.

and pleasure.' Collecting and publishing authentic witchcraft narratives thus served to 'secure some of the Out-works of Religion .[34] * [36]

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If supernaturalism retained, even increased, its importance, the types of causation that were allowed for in the old and the new scientific paradigms could also show striking continuity—though not a continuity allowed for in traditional historical concepts of the 'Scientific Revolution'. Occult causation, in particular, which (as we saw earlier) was vital for orthodox demonology, was finally accommodated at the heart of natural philosophy after more than two centuries of epistemological ambiguity. Certainly, many seventeenth-century scholars denounced it. The pure mechanists and Cartesians laughed at the Aristotelians for their indulgence and laziness in invoking occult causes when they could think of no other way to explain puzzling phenomena. They jeered at scientists who relied on causes that they themselves admitted were unknowable. And they ridiculed 'sympathy' and 'antipathy' as things that could not possibly cause motion between inert, insentient corpuscles of matter.

Even so, it proved difficult, and in some notable cases impossible, to do without occult causation.[37] The alternative, purely mechanical, explanations for things like spring, the cohesion of matter, and magnetism were extremely clumsy and implausible, and for the cause of weight a mechanical explanation could not be provided at all. Even transference of motion itself remained inexplicable to many, without the existence of active principles. In the end, Newton himself could only come to terms with gravitational forces by arguing that there must be 'occult active principles in the world to initiate and preserve motions'.[38] For this he was attacked by Leibniz, who said in a famous accusation that Newton's gravity' was a 'chimerical thing, a scholastic occult quality'. But not only was Newton able to distance himself from the kind of unintelligibility attached to the scholastic version of occult qualities; his stance on the whole issue had been anticipated by a series of natural philosophers among his older contemporaries.

The extent to which experimental philosophy compromised with (what we might call) 'occultism' is still being worked out by historians, following pioneering studies by Keith Hutchison and John Henry. English new scientists were able more and more to accept the fact that occult qualities were not accessible to the senses as it became apparent that many natural qualities were insensible and that it was only their effects that need be accessible to empirical investigation. Insensibility was, after all, at the heart of the corpuscularian conception of matter, and it was further implied by an epistemology that deprived objects of 'all their surface qualities by locating them in the mind, so that reality itself consisted entirely of hidden qualities known only to the philosopher or scientist'.[39] At the same time, what was active in nature was what was occult in it too since, again, the very character of the supposed causality meant that it was, as Henry puts it, ‘actiologically incomplete’.[40] Many exponents of the new science were, in consequence, able to reconcile the idea of occult properties with mechanical explanations of phenomena—including Boyle, More, Robert Hooke, Walter Charlcton, William Petty, and, of course, Newton. ‘A professed belief in occult qualities and active principles in matter’, concludes Henry, ‘was certainly a legitimate stance for a seventeenth-century natural philosopher to take up.’[41] Charlcton spoke in his *Physiologia Epicuro-Gassendo-Charltoniana* of ‘Occult qualities made manifest’, and the philosophical campaign he referred to should be seen as the continuation of a very old intellectual preoccupation by other means, rather than as an abandonment of it.[42] ‘The mechanists of the seventeenth century’, it has also been said, ‘had a considerable problem if they wanted to maintain that they were different in kind from the magicians of old, and were not simply the first generation of *successful* magicians.’[43]

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[34] More, Jrt/iWo/e *against atheism*^ 162; Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphal*^ 57: cf. Sinclair *Satan's invisible iPorld/PrcbccloR^dce^.xv.*

[37] For what follows I depend on Henry, 'Occult Qualities and the Experimental Philosophy'. 335-81; cf. Schaffer, 'Occultism and Reason', 130-4.

[31] Henry, 'Occult Qualities and the Experimental Philosophy', 339.

[39] MacDonald Ross, 'Occultism and Philosophy', 102; cf. Henry, 'Occult Qualities and the Experimental Science', 361-2.

For the present, the important point is not why the occult retained its importance, but that, in doing so, it made it possible to go on talking validly about demonic causation as well. It is clear from the witchcraft narratives collected and published by Glanvill, Boyle, More, and Sinclair, many of them simply repeated from the demonologies and trial pamphlets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that there was no major change of view as to the causal basis of demonic effects. The agency of demons and witches could go on being defended with absolute scientific integrity—indeed, with all the fresh integrity of a newly minted, highly prestigious, and politically correct scientific paradigm—as either based on, or analogous to, the workings of nature’s most hidden properties. It could still be said, by Locke, that whereas human intelligence could only speculate about the real essences of things, ‘Beings above us’ had the power to know them perfectly—they had ‘as clear Ideas of the radical Constitution of Substances, as we have of a Triangle, and so perceive how all their Properties and Operations flow from thence.’[44] In later seventeenth-century England, and despite claims to novelty, Boyle was dividing the causes of things into the same three groups that had always governed early modern natural philosophical debate: the miraculous, the routine, and the ‘monadical’. He spoke (in the local dialect of mechanism) of things ‘supernatural, natural in a stricter sense, that is mechanical, and natural in a larger sense, which I call supra-mechanical’.[45] Many of the subject-areas that were crucial for working out the new models of enquiry—notably, all the difficult phenomena relevant to souls and spirits—fell within the third category; so, we must assume, did demonology.[46]

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[40] Henry, ‘Occult Qualities and the Experimental Science*, 359. [41] Ibid. 357.

[42] Millen, ‘Manifestation of Occult Qualities’, 186, see also 190,199-200,211-14,215, regarding the methods adopted by mechanical philosophers for dealing scientifically with occult qualities as ‘not essentially different’ from those of the early modern scholastics.

[41] MacDonald Ross, ‘Occultism and Philosophy’, 102 (author’s emphasis).

[44] Ibid. 102, citing John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* bk. IV, ch. iii, §24; bk. II, ch. xxiii, §13; bk. IV, ch. iii, §6 [in the edn. by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1975), 554-5,303-4,543]. My added quotation from bk. III, ch. xi, §23 (p. 520).

[45] Robert Boyle, ‘The Christian virtuoso, Part 2’, in *Works,* vi. 754. Cf. Richard Boulton, *The possibility and reality of magick, sorcery, and witchcraft, demonstrated. Or, a vindication of A compleat history of magick, sorcery, and witchcraft. In answer to Dr. Hutchinson’s Historical essay* (London, 1722), 159,177,179; on

Like so many other contemporary matters of natural philosophical interest, demonism was held to be intelligible in its effects but not in its causes, something real and manifest as an ‘experienced’ matter of fact but as yet unexplained. As late as 1737, William Whiston, Newton’s disciple and his successor in the Lucasian chair of mathematics, wrote that the assaults of invisible demons, as long as they were well attested, were ‘no more to be denied, because we cannot, at present, give a direct solution of them, than are Mr. Boyle’s experiments about the elasticity of the air; or Sir Isaac Newton’s demonstrations about the power of gravity, are to be denied, because neither of them are to be solved by mechanical causes.’[47] Of the causes of ‘fascination’, Glanvill said: ‘this kind of agency is as conceivable as any one of those qualities ignorance hath cal’d Sympathy and Antipathy, the reality of which we doubt not, though the manner of action be unknown.’[48] Much influenced by Glanvill, the Leicestershire rector Benjamin Camfield answered Webster’s attack on the reality of witchcraft (specifically, the impossibility of material actions by immaterial beings) by suggesting that its inexplicability rested on ‘no more than that ignorance we must be contented with in other matters of occult Philosophy, where we subscribe often to the thing, though we cannot declare the manner of it’.[49] The point is made effectively by the juxtaposition of Newton’s often cited description of active principles as ‘appearing to us by Phaenomena, though their Causes be not yet discover’d’, Boyle’s identical account of the phenomenon of ‘spring’, and Glanvill’s summary of the principles of witchcraft research: ‘For we know not any thing of the world we live in, but by experiment, and the Phaenomena; and there is the same way of speculating immaterial nature, by extraordinary Events and Apparitions.’[50]

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There remains the empirical task that Glanvill and his friends actually set themselves—that is to say, the task of collecting what, in their view, were properly authenticated reports of phenomena like witchcraft and apparitions. At one level, they were simply compiling a natural history of the demonic—much in the same way as other scholars associated with the Royal Society were busy compiling natural histories of

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Boulton and the ‘Boylean tradition’ of witchcraft belief, see Bostridgc, ‘Debates about Witchcraft’, 220-/9, esp. 224. By contrast, the sceptical writer Jacques de Daillon, *Datmonologia; or, a treatise of spirits* (London, 1723), 144-8, made no allowance for preternatural, or, accordingly, demonic works.

[46] For the first principles of Boyle’s demonology, see ‘The excellency of theology’, in *Works,* iv. 19 fi-, cf. ‘Of the high veneration man’s intellect owes to God’, in *Works,* v. 146-8.

[47] Whiston, *Account of the daemoniacks,* 74.

[48] Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus,* 80, see also 85.

[49] Benjamin Camfield, *A theological discourse of angels, and their ministries* (London, 1678), 203.

[50] Newton and Boyle cited by Henry, ‘Occult Qualities and the Experimental Philosophy’, 358 and 360; [Glanvill], *Blom at modern sadducism,* 94. Cf. Glanvill on the weapon-salve in his *The vanity of dogmatizing: Or confidence in opinions* (London, 1661), 207-8, also cited by Henry, ‘Occult Qualities and the Experimental Philosophy’, 359, note 85.

what Thomas Sprat called 'either ... Nature, Arts, or Works'.[51] In this context, the idea of a 'natural history' had quite precise meanings, derived largely from Bacon. He had not only established the credentials of the history of preternatural phenomena, but suggested that witchcraft might be one of its topics. For Baconians, therefore^ there need have been no contradiction in applying empirical techniques to this particular subject. They inherited a conception of natural philosophy that placed special emphasis on what was 'new, rare, and unusual' in nature.[52] Sprat wrote that while it would be wrong to investigate nothing else but 'prodigious, and extraordinary causes, and effects', it was very important that the 'judicious Experimenter' should examine and record 'the most unusual and monstrous forces, and motions of matter'. 'Singular, and irregular effects', he continued, served for particular instruction and imitation. It was not just that these were things that seemed miraculous but would not be so if they were properly investigated; in addition, there were 'many Qualities, and Figures, and powers of things, that break the common Laws, and transgress the standing Rules of Nature'.[53]

Like Bacon, Sprat thought that these transgressive phenomena were especially significant because they were uniquely revealing. Among the examples he gave of those investigated by or communicated to the Royal Society were astronomical wonders, strange weather conditions (including the raining of fish and frogs), extraordinary natural and artificial springs, earthquakes, loadstones, the refining of metals, wonderful flora and fauna, monstrous births, and remarkable surgical operations. The list concludes with this typical selection of natural histories of 'prerogative instances':

> Relations of sympathetick Cures, and Trials: of the effects of Tobacco-oyl for casting into Convulsion fits: of Moors killing themselves by holding their Breaths: of walking on the Water by the help ofa Girdle filled with Wind: of Pendulum Clocks: of several rare guns, and Experiments with them: of new Quadrants and Astronomical Instruments: of Experiments of refraction made by the French Academy: of a way to make use of eggs in painting, instead of Oyl: of the Island Hirta in Scotland: of the Whispering place at Glocester: of the Pike of Tenariff.[54]

Since there is no serious incongruity between these items of scientific research and the demonological subjects chosen by Glanvill, his attempt to compile a natural history of witchcraft may be seen as just as Baconian—another attempt to put the 'History of Prctergencrations', into practice. Admittedly, these types of phenomena, precisely because they were interventions in nature, and not spontaneous natural effects, seem to fall under Bacon's second subdivision of natural history, the history of artificial effects, and not the third. But Bacon did not think so himself. Nor did another of his Royal Society admirers, Robert Plot, who devised his popular and influential *Natural History of Oxfordshire* (1677) on strictly Baconian lines, divided it into the three subdivisions that Bacon had suggested, and included narratives about demonic happenings at Woodstock in 1649 and at Bampton after the Restoration in a section devoted to ‘preternatural’ marvels. These narratives duly found their way into the 1689 edition of *Saducismtis tritimphaliis* in the form of editorial additions by Henry More.[5] [5]

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[51] Sprat, *History ofthe Royal Society,* 257; Kirsch, 'Demonology and Science', 364-5.

[52] Secabove, Ch. 16. ” Sprat, *History of the Royal Society,* 214-15.

M Ibid. 199; cf. *Hunter, John Aubrey,* 136-8.

As for the criteria for what was to count as a reliable report of a witchcraft phenomenon, there was no question of Glanvill and Boyle not choosing the standards of contemporary natural philosophical enquiry; as its chief proponents, they could hardly do otherwise. But here, too, scientific demonology’ involved issues that have been shown to be at the heart of the important controversies of the Restoration period. Devising a model of experimental behaviour that secured agreement with its factual claims was a way of protecting the new philosophy from the charge that it might prove socially divisive. At the same time, its apologists could portray this assent in ways that strengthened orthodox notions of authority, while portraying any dissent (or failure to experiment correctly) in terms that established the boundaries of the proper natural philosophical community.[56] The technique of witnessing was crucial here; it ‘defined the public domain of experiment: it mapped the audience, dominated the literary technology of experimental reporting, and established matters of fact as worthwhile products of experimental work.’[57] It also allowed for vicarious participation in the truths of experimental enquiry, without the need always to replicate the original actions of the experimenter. This was obviously relevant to witchcraft matters, where contrivance was usually impossible and where virtual rather than direct experience was often all that was to be had.[5]’ Narratives of witchcraft were, in fact, on entirely the same empirical and discursive level as the historical reports of ‘laboratory’ or other events that typically made up the writings of Royal Society fellows. Boyle’s insistence to Glanvill that these narratives be ‘warranted with testimonies and authorities’ and ‘well verified’,[59] together with the collaborative nature of the research on which *Saducismtis triumphatus* was based, can each be seen, therefore, as an attempt to make demonology conform exactly to the protocols of the experimental philosophy.[60]

The general level of knowledge aimed at, moreover, was not only identical in the two cases; it was, once again, continuous with that which the majority of writers on witchcraft had always aimed at—that is to say, neither absolute certitude nor radical doubt, but balanced assessment. In their epistemology, the experimental philosophers, like many seventeenth-century English intellectuals in other fields, had

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” Robert Plot, *The natural history of Oxfordshire, being an essay toward the natural history of England* (Oxford, 1677), 1-2,204—10; cf. id., *The natural history of Staffordshire* (Oxford, 1686), sig. al', 1,9-19, for the same Baconian principles and further refs, to demons and witches; Joshua Ch’ildrcy, *Britannia Baconica: or, the natural rarities of England, Scotland, and Wales* (London, 1661), title-page, sigs. Bl'-B2'; John Aubrey, *The Natural History of Wiltshire,* cd. John Britton (London, 1847), 120-2

* These matters arc explored at magisterial length in Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump,* and summarized in Schaffer, ‘Making Certain’, esp. 141-2. Cf. Peter Dear, *'Totius in Verba:* Rhetoric and Authority in the Early Royal Society*, *Isis, 16* (1985), 145-61.

[57] Schaffer, ‘Making Certain*, 146.

[11] Ibid. 143, for the term ‘virtual experience*.

” Boyle, Letter to Joseph Glanvill, 18 Sept. 1677, *Works,* vi. 58.

[60] Sec, however, the differences of opinion over hydrostatics between More and Bovle ShaDin and Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump,* 207-24.

become not merely empiricists but probabilists and hypothesizes. The kind of assent they wished to secure was located in the middle ground between the extremes of mathematical necessity and mere opinion. It was associated, above all, with 'moral certainty', and characterized by things like weight of testimony, sufficient assurance, and reasonable proof. Natural philosophy took on the provisional character of an enquiry that recognized that many aspects of natural reality remained unknown and might be unknowable, and that belief might, therefore, be preferable to knowledge.[61]

It might even be said, looking back over my last few chapters from the vantage of Restoration England, that the old opposition between*scientia* and *niagia* was resolved in favour of the latter, not the former. At the very least, it is clear that the issue of relative ignorance that had always made preternatural philosophy problematical was still working for, as well as against, orthodox demonology. If Webster could direct it at witchcraft beliefs, Glanvill could direct it at people like Webster; the first wanted the suspension of belief pending further natural knowledge, the second, the suspension of disbelief on the same terms.[62] Glanvill, who was a leading exponent of probabilism, believed that its principles should be applied as thoroughly to witchcraft testimony as to any other branch of natural philosophy. Belief in witchcraft's reality was to be sustained by the intermediate level of certainty appropriate to personal observation and vicarious reporting, while witchcraft sceptics were guilty of precisely the dogmatism and credulity they claimed to find in those they attacked. To say that witchcraft was impossible because its mode of action was unperceived was tantamount, he argued, to saying that the whole world was 'inchanted' and nature but a 'grand Imposture'. All the objects of sense, after all, were ultimately as elusive as 'the obstrusest matters of Magick and Fascinations'.[63] In the same way, the author who replied to Wagstaffe's *The question of witchcraft debated* was able to concede what looks to modern eyes like one of its most important sceptical claims without either giving up the belief in witchcraft or surrendering contemporary scientific respectibility. Wagstaffe had said that so much remained inexplicable in nature that it was likely that natural events were being misattributed to demons. For his opponent, on the other hand, there was no reason to deny demonic agency in matters of witchcraft 'only because we cannot tell how they are done'. In fact, that 'no man has yet attain'd to that perfection in Natural Philosophy, as to know the thousandth part of what may be done by natural means', was an inducement to go on accepting the reality of the witches' pact in the mean time.[64]

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[61] Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty, passim,* csp. 15-73 ('Natural Philosophy and Experimental Science'), 194-226 ('Witchcraft').

[62] See also Camficld, *Theological discourse,* 203-4, citing Webster, *Displaying,* 267.

[61] [Glanvill], *Blow at modern sadducism,* 136; cf. Prior, 'Joseph Glanvill, Witchcraft, and Seventeenth-Century Science', 189-192; Henry G. van Lceuwen, *The Problem of Certainty in English Thought* (The Hague, 1963), 71-89, csp. 87. See also Glanvill, .SWnnrttHH *triumphatus,* 334-5, on faith in 'sensible evidence' reported by credible witnesses, and More, *Antidote against atheisme,* 3-5, on the general criteria of credibility.

[64] R.T., *The opinion of witchcraft vindicated. In an answer to a book intituled the question of witchcraft debated* (London, 1670), 9, 15; cf. Wagstaffe, *Question of witchcraft debated,* 118-20.

At this late stage in its history, then, demonology's traditional commitment to mixed accounts—part acceptance, part rejection—received endorsement from those making the most sophisticated knowledge claims of the day. Boyle thought nineteen out of every twenty witchcraft narratives to be untrue. 'Many relations of witches', he said, were discredited and the rest suspected; 'we live in an age, and a place, wherein all stories of witchcrafts, or other magical feats, arc by many, even of the wise, suspected.' But one 'circumstantial 'and fully verified narrative, if Glanvill could provide it, would convince him.[65] Whatever the reason for the intellectual decline of witchcraft beliefs it does not appear to have stemmed—in the short term, at least—from unsympathetic epistemology.

* * *

Restoration philosophers were not, then, concerned with witchcraft as a social menace; it was disbelief in its reality that posed the fundamental threat to society. They did not, in consequence, urge the eradication of witches, even if, like Glanvill, they accepted the legal evidence for 'Diabolick Contracts'. As Simon Schaffer has rightly said, there was 'no correlation between endorsement of the reality of spirits and support for witch trials'.[66] Nor, on the other side, did scepticism about witchcraft lead Webster to disbelieve in active principles in nature (or Hobbes and Selden to deny that witches should still be legally punished). The experimentalists were interested instead in the natural science of demonic agency, a subject that they found demanding both for its ontological and epistemological complexities and for its vital cultural implications. It has been said that 'precisely because witchcraft raised problems of fact finding within a practical area ... it was a forcing ground for working out the implications of the new approach to evidence.'[67] Demonology also presented an array of scientifically anomalous data—that is to say, anomalous with respect to the favoured scientific paradigm of the day, the natural philosophy of mechanism. In a letter of 18 September 1677 Boyle wrote to Glanvill in unmistakably Baconian terms:

> I might add, that some of the particulars you mentioned to me, as (especially) those of the insensible marks of witches, and the way of detecting them, may suggest odd speculations to a naturalist, and help to enlarge the somewhat too narrow conceptions men are wont to have of the amplitude and variety of the works of God; since, if it appear, that there are intelligent agents that are able to increase; whereas men can but determine the motions of the parts of matter, the discovery of it may advantageously enlarge our knowledge, though not, perhaps, in physics, strictly so called, yet in [natural] philosophy.[68]

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[65] Boyle, Letter to Joseph Glanvill, 18 Sept. 18 1677, *Works,* vi. 57-8.

[66] Schaffer, 'Godly Men and Mechanical Philosophers', 79. In the early stages of his work on witchcraft Glanvill was, however, dependent on Robert Hunt, the Somerset JP, who was 'zealous in his persecution of witches'; Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton,* 93. Glanvill's *Some philosophical considerations* was in the form of a letter to Hunt, and in his *Blow at modem sadducism,* 125-34, he found evidence for the demonic pact in the records of Hunt's trials.

[67] Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty,* 226.

[u] Boyle, Letter to Jospeh Glanvill, 18 Sept. 1677, *Works,* vi. 58.

Glanvill himself, it has been said, was 'attracted to the problem of witches largely because of his interest in certain metaphysical questions made peculiarly important by developments in science'.[69] At the same time, demonology was not a subject that, in the political and moral climate of Restoration England at least, could conceivably be abandoned. Faced with this double challenge, it was the duty of natural philosophers to adjust (or seek to adjust[70]) their explanations of phenomena until the strangeness disappeared and the interests of cultural orthodoxy were satisfied. We have seen that Bacon had spoken of the need to reduce and comprehend obtuse, preternatural phenomena 'under some Form or fixed law'. This is what Glanvill, More, and Boyle were trying to do by treating witchcraft as a 'prerogative instance'; as the term 'prerogative' suggests, they were, once again, giving witchcraft scientific priority.

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[69] Prior, 'Joseph Glanvill, Witchcraft, and Seventeenth-Century Science', 181-2.

[70] Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton,* 89, suggests that attenuated mechanism was subject to 'philosophical untidiness or inconsistency'.

PART III

History

20

Witchcraft and History

> To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.
>
> (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

> Every historical idea ... is always adequate to the moment when it appears and always inadequate to the moment that follows.
>
> (Benedetto Croce, *Teoria e storia della Storiografia)*

At the outset of this book it was argued that even mere descriptions of the demonic could not succeed in isolation. ‘Witchcraft’ was not, so to speak, a positive term—a simple piece of naming—but the product of sometimes complex differentiations. Those who wrote about it were struck especially by its inversionary character and this very act of recognition committed them to conventions of thought and expression. Ultimately their accounts betray very widely held assumptions about order and disorder in human affairs. But description could not, of course, be their only aim. They were also bound to consider issues of causation and to ask whether demonic agents could actually achieve the feats attributed to them and by what means. In particular, it was important to distinguish their actions from phenomena that were as esoteric or as puzzling (that is, ‘occult’) but differently caused. In Part III suggested that questions of this sort were essentially scientific in character and that here demonology became thoroughly embroiled with some of the pressing concerns of late Renaissance natural philosophy. Actions which in the first context had a largely ritual significance now became fit subjects for epistemology. The explanations and classifications which emerged took their place, as forms of knowledge, alongside those offered in contemporary physics, medicine, and natural magic.

Sooner or later, however, witchcraft theorists confronted a third set of problems—transposing their investigations into yet another key. For they could scarcely evade the additional matter of why the devil and his agents were so much more active in their own age than in any other. ‘What is the reason’, ran a chapter heading in Franciscus Agricola’s *Griindtlicher Bericht,* ‘why so many Magicians, Sorceresses and Witches are discovered in these our times?’[1] ‘Why’, wrote Hermann Samson from Riga, ‘are there so many Magicians in this present age?’[2] James VI of Scotland ended his *Daemonologie* wondering why ‘divcllishe practises ... were never so rife in these partes, as they are now.’[3] Pierre de Lancrc asked not merely about the number of contemporary magicians and witches but when precisely they had first infiltrated France[4]. For many others, discussion of this further aspect of the subject—let us call it the dimension of witchcraft as event—was a vital, even indispensable, ingredient of successful demonology. The actions under study now became a kind of *res gestae*—more properly *gesta Dei*—capable of supporting speculation about change and development in human society as a whole.

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[1] Agricola, *Griindtlicher Bericht,* 81 (= 80).

[1] Samson, *Neun... Hexen predigt,* sig. Eii'.

[1] James VI and I, *Daemonologie,* 81.

'De Lancre, *Du Sortilege,* 280.

This does not mean that the speculation was always very profound. Any number of moral failings and sources of malice could be superficially blamed for the incidence of witchcraft in time. Many said blandly that God was simply punishing an unprecedentedly sinful age. But this was always likely to beg more questions about why contemporary sins exceeded former ones, why they warranted such awful retribution, and what God's overall purpose was in this. In effect, witchcraft authors were led on to consider the deeper significance of magic and witchcraft as defining aspects of their age and, thus, keys to its meaning. They became immersed in the temporal dynamics of demonism, in the patterns that could be traced in its manifestations past, present, and future. In short, the literature of witchcraft became a reflection on history.

Modern historians have themselves scarcely ignored the question of why witchcraft prosecutions emerged between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries and not at some other time. How contemporaries accounted for what they too saw as a historical puzzle may therefore be of some intrinsic interest. But the more important purpose will be to show that here, as elsewhere, their view of witchcraft was bound up with the wider intellectual interests of Europeans. On the one hand, we shall find that early modern demonology depended for its categories of historical speculation on one of the dominant historiographical models of the period. Its writers shared their notions of agency and causation, of change and periodization, and of the overall shape and morality of the historical process with the general practitioners of Christian or, as it might be termed, 'Augustinian' history-writing. In particular, they were preoccupied with one of its central themes—the eschatological reading of cunent affairs. On the other hand, demonology itself offered opportunities for confirming and refining this historiography. The evidence of events of witchcraft alone reinforced the binary division of Augustine's world-history as a dramatic struggle between antithetical moral forces, with (what Claude-Gilbert Dubois called) its 'dichotomous design ... founded on opposition, of which the outcome is made certain by the victory of one group over the other.'[5] Evidence of their acceleration gave precision to the idea that the denouement was near, made the placing of present time at the end of history a more exact matter, and aided greatly with the identification of the Antichrist. In this sense, the phenomenon of witchcraft helped substantially to focus an entire historiographical paradigm.

The intellectual traffic was thus two-way; witchcraft writers depended on a theology of history (in which the devil had, in any case, a primordial and constitutive role) and at the same time contributed to its elaboration. The result was an apocalyptic interpretation of witchcraft radically unlike anything that could have emerged either from the other styles of historiography available at the time or from those which governed historians' views after the age of witch trials was over. This appears to present a problem of access exactly analogous to the one encountered in Part II. There, the historical intelligibility of outmoded science was under double threat from a rationalist account of scientific knowledge in general and an indifference to anything but a triumphalist reading of its past. Here, the cogency of early modern eschatology might well be missed by intellectual historians with a theoretical allegiance to empiricism as the basis of modern historical research and a reluctance to recross the threshold of the eighteenth century, except to trace the antecedents of that empiricism in the very un-apocalyptic tastes of (let us say) philologists, jurists, and antiquarians.

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[5] Claude-Gilbert Dubois, *La Conception de l'histoire en France au XVIe siècle, 1560-1610* (Paris 1977), 19-20, see also 37,408.

Fortunately, the problem is not so acute. The debate about relativism in historical knowledge has assumed nothing like the stature of the same debate in science, largely because historians in general, and intellectual and cultural historians in particular, have, for the most part, conceded the point. The naive positivism of those for whom the past *wie es eigentlich gewesen* could be faithfully pictured in narrative, as if caught by surprise, has long been abandoned as a piece of mystification. And the attempt to warrant a claim to tell the historical truth by giving a straightforward account of the 'facts' has been shown to be no more than an assertion of authority. Meaning is now generally recognized to be a presupposition, as well as a product, of what historians say, its whereabouts being the framework of assumptions in which they operate in the present.[6] As for the altogether more sophisticated 'logical positivism' of those who have sought (in principle) to reduce all empirical enquiry to the same methodological canons, this too has been discredited. Quite apart from its unreliability as an account of knowledge in the one area (natural and physical science) where it was thought to be impregnable, it is now widely judged to be incapable of grasping the very thing that makes human actions what they are—the fact that they mean something to those who perform them. The alternative arguments in favour of the 'hermeneutic' approach to the human sciences are, in essence, developments of the views of older champions of the autonomy of the *Geisteswissenschaften,* writers who, like Dilthey, Croce, and Collingwood (all of them practising historians), made interpretation the prerequisite of understanding. But historians have also been impelled in this direction by developments in ordinary language philosophy, by the neo-structuralist attention to signification, and by the relatively near-at-hand achievements of social and cultural anthropologists. These influences are too complex to summarize briefly, yet too familiar to need further emphasis. Their important cumulative effect has been to unhook history from its traditionally realist moorings by gradually removing the sense in which historical thought is answerable to anything but itself.[7]

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[6] For a defence of this idea, see Roland Barthes, 'Le Discours de l'histoire', *Social Science Information,* 6 (1967), 65-75.

[7] For the general demise of logical positivism in social theory, see Quentin Skinner, 'Introduction: The Return of Grand Theory', in id. (ed.), *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (Cambridge, 1985), 6-12. For defenders of the *Geisteswissenschaften,* see B. A. Maddock, *An Introduction to Historical Thought* (London, 1980), 151-60.

Whatever its other effects, this has potentially liberating consequences for the way we see the discipline’s own past. A mode of thought that floats free of anything but its own discursive possibilities ought (if it is properly self-conscious) to be hostile to a triumphalist account of its own emergence. Now, more than ever, historians ought to be able to concede that history is simply a form of insight for those who construe the past in certain ways. They ought, in consequence, to be charitable to forms of historical understanding radically discontinuous with their own. In the case of early modern historiography this is, in fact, now happening. It was once usual to sift the Renaissance for early intimations of the attitudes and skills that later came to dominate historical work. Authors went in search of‘the origins of certain modern problems of historical inquiry’, ‘the origins of our historical mindedness’, and ‘the foundations of modern historical scholarship’." With intentions exactly like those of pre-Kuhnian historians of science they aimed at ‘a chronology of accumulating positive achievement in a technical speciality defined by hindsight’.[9] In general terms, it was the humanist history-writing of the scholars, with its interest in politics, its increasingly secular view of human motivation, and its commitment to literary good practice that monopolized attention.

More even-handed treatment has revealed the resilience and popularity of very different historiographical ideals. We can now see that the Bible and Augustine’s universal theodicy continued to offer an entirely satisfying framework for the interpretation of the historical process. The importance of theological time, the ‘time of the church’, reflected the attention given to salvation, its channels and its processes.[10] Providence remained fundamental to conceptions of the causation and purpose of events and the idea of the Antichrist to their morality. Historical sub-skills like the study of prophecy and the reading of portents flourished as never before. Prominent, too, were condemnations by churchmen and other interested parties of styles of interpreting time that challenged those that were officially sanctioned—in particular, judicial astrology and divination.[11] Above all, witch-prosecuting Europe witnessed the revival and consolidation of eschatology as a preoccupying concern. This was not just a matter for intellectuals, although it is true that the Biblicists among them made this the last great age of exegesis of Revelation and its Old Testament equivalent, Daniel.[12] It has been suggested, for example, that in late fifteenth- and

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[*] F. Smith Fussncr, *The Historical Revolution: English Historical Writing and Thought 1580-1640* (London, 1962); George I luppert, *The Idea of Perfect History: Historical Erudition and Historical Philosophyin Renaissance France* (London, 1970); D. R. Kelley, *The Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship: Language, Lan>, and History in the French Renaissance* (New York, 1970).

’ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Essential Tension: Selected Studies in Scientific Tradition and Change* (London, 1977), 107.

[10] Jacques Lc Goff, *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages,* trans. Arthur Goldhammcr (London, 1980), 30.

[11] See, for example, R. J. W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy 1550-1700: An Interpretation* (Oxford, 1979), 394-9.

[11] There is a bibliography of 16th- and 17th-c. apocalyptic writings, amounting to just over 1,000 items, many of them commentaries on Revelation, in Patrides and Wittreich (eds.), *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature,* 373-412.

early sixteenth-century Italy, and Savonarolan Florence in particular, eschatological sentiments penetrated every level of society. This presents a nice counterpoint to the literary and more closed tradition of Ciceronian historical thought in Italy, on which historians of history have usually concentrated in their search for modernity. Indeed, throughout early modern Europe, eschatology had implications for the religious experience of ordinary people and ordinary communities as well as for their church leaders. Its social universality and its central role in shaping religious violence have been demonstrated, above all, in Denis Crouzet's magisterial account of the roots of religious conflict in sixteenth-century France.[13] To study its place in European culture is thus to gain access to a genuinely more popular, more immediate, and (arguably) more typical conception of time. Adjustments of vision have already made this a possibility. I have attempted only the more limited task of portraying eschatology as the intellectual context for the historical-mindedness of the writers on demonism, and as the source of a general expectancy about things like witchcraft.

The way a society makes sense of its past is rarely a matter of indifference and often a major component of its self-image; it is always 'one of the ways in which a society reveals itself, and its assumptions and beliefs about its own character and destiny'.[14] Time itself has had a social history, in the form of competing conceptions of its shape and instrumentality.[15] This, of course, is true, irrespective of whether the perceived past is real or mythical. Indeed, this is a distinction that history's location in a present world of thought calls into radical doubt. For what is real or mythical in a view of the past is only a function of the rules that the historians responsible for it choose to follow; the past is, in this sense, only ever a modification of the present. There have been two particularly helpful statements of this idea in the philosophy of the last half-century. One was Michael Oakeshott's elegant proposal that historical experience was simply a 'mode' of present experience—that is, 'the whole of reality subsumed under the category of the past'.[16] The other is contained in the principles of transformation by which Lévi-Strauss has linked linguistic signs, social structures, and the patterns of myths as homologous human artefacts.[17] It is true that each of these formulations neglects the obstinacy with which people (and even historians) persist in attributing objectivity to the pasts they construe. For Oakeshott this was one of several contradictions that eventually rendered history unsatisfactory as a cognitive arrest. For Lévi-Strauss it has been a matter of the merest superficiality. Yet each formulation is also suggestive of the conditions of intelligibility that must obtain if the past is to have any meaning at all. In what follows I have tried to acknowledge both these features of historical thought. I have sought to portray a particular early modern view of the past without doubting its objectivity for those who held it; but I have also recognized in it a modification of values that were current in early modern society itself. In Augustinianism, conflict in history was, in any case, consciously explored as the temporal equivalent of opposition in language and moral antithesis between communities of men and women. It follows that the witchcraft depicted here will be the same as the witchcraft depicted in Part I—*sub specie praeteritorum.*

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[13] Denis Crouzet, *Les Guerriers de Dieu: La Violence au tempi des troubles de religion* (2 vols.; Paris, 1990). See also Willem Frijhoff, 'The Meaning of the Marvelous: On Religious Experience in the Early Seventeenth-Century Netherlands', in L. Laeyendecker, L. G. Jansma, and C. H. A. Verhaar (eds.), *Experiences and Explanations: Historical and Sociological Essays on Religion in Everyday Life* (Ljouwert, 1990), 79-101. On prophecy in particular, see Ottavia Niccoli, *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy,* trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton, 1990), esp. 3-29.

[14] J. W. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge, 1981), 1-2; cf. Marshall Sahlins, 'Other Times, Other Customs: The Anthropology of History', *American Anthropologist,* 85 (1983), 517-44.

[15] Le Goff, *Time, Work, and Culture,* p. xiii.

[16] Michael Oakeshott, *Experience and its Modes* (Cambridge, 1933), 118, see also 86—168.

[17] For a convenient summary, see Lawrence Rosen, 'Language, History, and the Logic of Inquiry in Lévi-Strauss and Sartre', *Hist. Theory,* 10 (1971), 269-94.

21

Postremus Furor Satanae

> Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.
>
> (Revelation 12:12)

> these are the last times, and Satan seeth, that he hath but a short time to continue, therefore he bestirreth himselfe.
>
> (William Perkins, *A fruitfull dialogue concerning the end of the world)*

WHEN writers asked questions about why witchcraft was so prevalent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the answers they gave were invariably couched in the language of eschatology—that is, they reflected ideas about the end of history and the events that were expected to herald and accompany it. Witchcraft and demonism were spoken of as aspects of that final period of time in which men and women were currently living. Though initially puzzling, they became perfectly intelligible as features of a decaying world. In a sense made quite precise by the exegesis of biblical prophecy, they were signs of the times; and investigating them could, in turn, lead to a better understanding of apocalyptical history and so to greater preparedness for its culmination.

As in other respects, the pattern is already clear in the *Malleus maleficarum.* The evil arts, explained its authors, had not emerged suddenly in any single epoch but developed and grown with the passing of the ages. It followed that with the fullness of time came the height of wickedness: 'And so in this twilight and evening of the world, when sin is flourishing on every side and in every place, when charity is growing cold, the evil of witches and their iniquities superabound?[1] This is an important remark, but not merely because the work was so extensively consulted and cited later on. It was Emile Mâle who pointed to the waning of charity, together with the spread of self-interest and the inversion of the social order, as the chief forms of moral decay which, at the end of the fifteenth century (and drawing on Matthew 24), were thought to precede the end of the world. To find witchcraft associated with these sins is thus an indication in itself of its ability to carry a precise historical significance.[2]

Everywhere in Europe this view was subsequently repeated. The French Catholic author Pierre Crespet thought that the flourishing of witches and magicians was a presage of the coming desolation and suppression of the faith.[3] His Dominican colleague Sebastian Michaelis agreed that it was a warning of the last days that could only be ignored by men and women repeating the follies of those who lived before the Flood—an allusion, frequently made in eschatological writings, to Christ's teaching (Matthew 24:37) that 'as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.'[4] If Michaelis's demonology was dominated by the apocalyptic expectation that he was witnessing Satan's unloosing, so too was Pierre Node's. A friar of the order of Minims and author of a sweeping and virulent polemic against witchcraft in France, he argued that wizards, magicians, and witches abounded in a world 'declining through its old age'. They were an accomplishment of prophecy and thus a vital indication that world-history was close to its conclusion.[5] In the same year, the Benedictine priest and theologian, René Benoist, suggested that the unprecedented flourishing of magic and witchcraft, which had ceased in the primitive church, could be traced to negligence of God and weak faith as the apocalyptic struggle between Christ and Satan neared its historical climax. It was the devil, he wrote, who made the last condition of things so much worse than the first.[6] Jean Le Normant, Sieur de Chiremont and *lieutenant assesseur criminel* in the *bailliage of* the Palais Royal, told Louis XIII that it was a sign of the death of the world that magic and sorcery were being practised more widely, more boldly, and with more impunity than ever before; God would punish the execrations of so many witches' sabbats by bringing history shortly to a close.[7] In 1653 the Huguenot pastor of Thoiry in the Pays de Vaud, Francois Perrault, was still suggesting that 'since (as it is said) the devil is ordinarily much more violent at the end than at the beginning, we can say with good cause that we are at the end of the world.'[8]

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[1] (Kramer and Sprengcr], *Malleus maleficarum,* 16; cf. Trithcmius, *Liber octo quaestionum,* in Hansen, *Quellen,* 293. The link between witchcraft and eschatology in the *Malleus maleficarum* was noticed by Will-Erich Peuckert, *Die Grosse Wende: Das apokalyptische Saeculum und Luther* (Hamburg, 1948), 119-30, and is explored in Houdard, *Sciences du Diable,* 28-32. In his preface to the modern French edn. of the *Malleus, Le Marteau des sorcières* (Paris, 1973), 58-9, Amand Danct associates the work with the eschatological mood prevailing at the end of the 15th c.

[2] Emile Mâle, *L Art religieux de la fin du moyen Age en France* (Paris, 1949), 440.

Other French writers who associated contemporary witchcraft and demonism with the last times included the Catholic controversialists Artus Désiré and Florimond de Raemond, the physician Claude Caron, the Augustin monk Sanson Birette, the *dauphinois* canon Jude Serclier, the collectors of marvels Jean de Marconvilleand Francois de Belleforest, and the Calvinist minister Pierre Viret.[9] Lambert Daneau believed he was living in the old age of the world—it would actually finish some time after 1666, he thought.[10] Even demons and witches were, it seems, obliged to admit the fact. In 1610, a devil in possession of the *aixoise* nun Louise Capeau warned that the Last Judgement was imminent; in 1613 Simone Dourlet confessed to Jean Le Normant that so much magic would never have been known but for the certainty 'that the end of the world approaches'.[11]

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[3] Crespet, *Deux Livres,* fo. 200'; cf. Jean Bencdicti, *La Triomphante P'ictoirede la vierge Marie, sur7 malms esprits, fmalement chasses du corps dune femme, dans feglise des Cordeleiersde Lyon* (Lyons, 1611), 70-1.

[4] Michaelis, *Admirable historic,* sig. B4'; for a fuller discussion of Michaelis sec Ch 28

[5] Node, *Declamation,* 25-6.

[6] [illegible] 12–13, 18; cf. [illegible] *Traicte enseignant en brefles causes des malefices,* 217-18. On Benoist s mentahte d'Apocalypse', see Pierre Mcsnard, *L'Essor de la philosophic politique au* xvi* sieclc, 3rd cdn. (Pans, 1969), 377-8.

[7] Jean Le Normant, *De-la fin du monde au roy tres-Chreslien Louis le juste* (n.p., 1625), 10-11; for a fuller discussion, see below, Ch. 28.

[8] Perrault, *Demonologie,* 183.

[9] Crouzet, *Guerriers de Dieu,* ii. 357-9 nn. 245 and 252, remarks on these connections between demonology and eschatology, and at 341 sees in Bodtn too 'une conscience prophetique'; cf. on Bodin's eschatology, Houdard, *Sciences au Diable,* 67-76.

[10] Daneau, *Treatise touching Antichrist,* sig. Bi', pp. 89-90.

In Germany, too, this was the view of history on which writers on demonology came to rely. A good example of a Lutheran arguing in this way is Andreas Musculus, church superintendent-general of Brandenburg, who issued several tracts dealing with the Last Judgement and the signs of the world's approaching end, as well as *Von des Teujels Tyranney* (1561). Musculus wished to show just how powerful was the devil's influence over affairs, as they moved rapidly to their conclusion. The age in which his readers lived was 'the very last morsel and final point of the world *{das alter letzte driimlein von der welt, und das letzte zipjlein),* which will soon slip from our hands, putting an end to this temporal and transitory realm and bringing in the imperishable and eternal'.[12] In his *De sagarum natura* of 1588, the physician and professor of natural philosophy at the Lutheran university of Corbach, Wilhcm Adolf Scribonius, declared that as the world deteriorated and Satan raged more furiously in the final age, so the number of magicians naturally grew.[13] Andreas Celichius and Jacob Coler later offered the same explanation for the rash of cases of demonic possession in Mecklenburg, Friedeburg, and elsewhere in the 1590s. Witchcraft and eschatology were adjacent interests of the Lutheran pastors David Mcder and Daniel Schaller and of the Marburg attorney Abraham Saur. In Johann Lauch's stridently apocalyptic sermons, given in Velburg in 1595-6, witchcraft was one of the sins of the last times that had brought the menace of Gog and Magog, in the shape of the Turks, down upon Europe.[14] For the Schmalkalden superintendent, Christoph Vischer, it was superstition, and especially the widespread use of blessings *{Segen),* that heralded the rampant demonism of the last times.[15]

In the early seventeenth century, Joachim Zehner, pastor of Schleusingen and superintendent-general of Henncbcrg, and Johannes Riidinger, who preached at Ober-Oppurg and Weyra in Saxony, invoked apocalyptic prophecy to account for the growth of witchcraft. Zehner applied Revelation to the devil's current efforts, redoubled as the Last Judgement approached, to turn God's children into his own servants, while Riidinger paralleled the Pauline warnings of the last evils with contemporary scourges like the Papacy, the Turks, and witches. Even in mid-century

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[11] Michaelis, *Admirable historic,* fos. 260-9; Le Normant, *Histoire veritable,* pt. 1, fo. 281 (for the full title of this work see below, Ch. 28 n. 7).

[12] Andreas Musculus, Kon *des Teufels Tyranney, Macht und Gewalt, Sonderlich in diesen letzten tagen, unterrichtung* (1561), in Stambaugh (cd.), *Teufelbiicher in Auswahl,* iv. 198. For Musculus's eschatology', sec esp. id., *Vom Jüngs ten Tag* (Erfurt, n.d. [1559]); id., *Vom Mesech und Kedar, vom Gog und Magog, von demgrossen trübsalfur der Welt Ende* (Frankfurt/Odcr, 1577).

[1J] Scribonius, *De sagarum natura,* fo. 40'.

[14] Johann Lauch, *Ein und Dreissig Türcken Predigten ... Von Gog unndMagog: Inn welchen gehandelt wirdt von dess Türcken herkommen und ursprung* (Lauingen, 1599), fos. 52'-56'.

[15] Vischer, *Einfelltiger ... Bericht wider den ... Segen,* sigs. Aiiii'-Av', Nv". For other examples, sec Hocker, *Der teufelselbs,* fos. xxxiii'-xxxix', who cites extensively from other contemporary Lutherans.

Revelation continued to inspire witchcraft authors like the archdeacon of the parish church in Ciistrin, Martin Muthreich, and the Rinteln preacher, Hinrich Rimphoff. In his *Drachen-König* (1647), based on the devil's enticement to witchcraft of a 9-year-old girl, Rimphoff gave an unusually vivid and alarming account of the threat of demonism, but he also consoled his readers; 'the Lord Jesus is coming soon with his beloved Last Judgement and he will deliver his bride, his holy Church, from this Hellish monster.'[16] Less numerous, the German Catholics followed much the same pattern as their French colleagues, as well as the pre-Reformation example of Abbot Trithemius. His theorizing on witchcraft was matched by an eschatology that saw the present as a penultimate age when the magic arts and sorcery would reign unchecked.[17] A century later, when Bishop Forner of Bamberg put his own witchcraft sermons into print, he spoke of a devil 'who, loosed from hell, seeks and plots the ruin of mankind before the world ends'. The Catholic author of a major guide to procedures in witchcraft trials, Theodor (i.e. Dietrich) Graminaeus, thought that Reformation heresy had heralded the last times and, once again, that the nearer they approached the more Satan raged.[18]

Elsewhere in European demonology the same general assumptions about history are so prevalent that they amount to an orthodoxy. In the Rhineland duchy of Cleves, Johann Weyer talked of an old age of the world during which the devil would exert his last powers over souls.[19] His opponent on witchcraft matters, the Swiss Thomas Erastus, felt threatened by a 'tide of superstition and magic that seemed to bespeak the coming of the Antichrist'.[20] In his *De natura daemonum* (1581) the Italian Giovanni D'Anania said that the abominable crime of witchcraft, while never absent from any age, had become prevalent 'in this last old age of the world'.[21] Petrus Martyr (Vcrmigli), Zwinglian professor (in exile) at Strasburg and Oxford, applied Christ's apocalyptic warning (Matthew, 24: 24) that 'there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders' to the magicians, diviners, and sorcerers of his own time.[22] One Spanish theologian, Francesco de Osuna, attributed the greater violence and persistence of the devil's attempts to subvert society to his awareness that the world was nearing its end; another, Juan Maldonado, said it was because the devil, as announced in Revelation, must be unchained as the last day approached.[21] * [23] In Sweden in 1669-70 the devil himself allegedly told the children at the Bldkulla sabbat 'that the day of Judgment will come speedily.'[24]

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[16] Rimphoff, *Drachen-König,* 53; Martin Muthreich, *Theologischer Bericht von dem sehr schrecklichen Zornsturm des TeuJJels, welchen er zu diesen letzen Zeiten auch durch seine Getreue die Zauberer, Hexen und dergleichen Unholden spiiren lesset* (Frankfurt/Oder, 1649), preface. Cf. Johann Adam Scherzer, *praeses* (Christian Trautmann, *respondent), Daemonologia site duae disputationes theologicae de tnalis angelis,* pub. by Trautmann (Leipzig, 1672), sigs. A2'-A3'.

[17] Pcuckert, *Die Grosse IZende,* 119; Thorndike, *History of Magic,* vi. 441.

[18] Forner, *Panoplia armalurae Dei,* 'Epistola Dcdicatoria', 3; for Graminaeus's eschatology see his *In Esaiam et prophetiam sex dierum Geneseos oratio, qua omnium prophetarum et legis argumenta summatim comprehenduntur, et ratio Antichrist! eiusquepraecursoris Lutheri evidentissime declarator* (Cologne 1571); cf. id., *Induct io site directorium,92-3.*

[19] Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum,* 23.

[20] Cesare Vasoli, 'Alchemy in the Seventeenth Century: The European and Italian Scene', in Righini Bonelli and Shea (eds.), *Reason, Experiment, and Mysticism,* 51.

[21] D'Anania, *De natura daemonum,* 147-8.

[22] Martyr, *Sommaire des trois questions,* 279.

In England, Old and New, the pattern was repeated among the Calvinists who tackled witchcraft matters. It was said by William Perkins, by no means an enthusiastic eschatologist, that 'in this last age of the world and among us also, this sinne of Witchcraft ought as sharply to be punished as in former times.'[25] His contemporary Henry Holland chose a Revelation text for his titlepage and an apocalyptic depiction of the devil, who 'secs his kingdome will not last long, and therefore now towards the end of the world' promotes witchcraft.[26] Among the Jacobean clerics Richard Bernard thought witchcraft the product of'the bloudy malice of Satan in these later times', Alexander Roberts declared it to be one of the dreadful evils prophesied for 'these last dayes, and pcrillous times', and Thomas Cooper traced it to 'the restoring cncrease of the Kingdome of Antichrist ... in these declining daies'.[27] One of the fullest expositions of the theme was subsequently given by Nathaniel Homes, a London minister who led several independent congregations in the 1640s and 1650s, became a convinced millenarian, and expected an imminent and very literal kingdom of Christ. His tract *Daemonologie and Theologie* (1650) was a denunciation of those diabolical arts—witchcraft, charming, divination, necromancy, astrology—that were 'foretold to be the idioms and proper markes of the Last Dayes (afore Christs appearance).'[2*] At the end of the seventeenth century Richard Baxter published his *The certainty of the world of spirits* (1691) after a period of intense study during which he reconsidered the themes of millenarian history.[29]

Nor should we forget Cotton Mather's argument that the devil's descent in wrath into New England was an infallible sign that the ' *Thousand Years* of prosperity for the Church of God' was not far off.[30] In 1692, at the height of the Salem witchcraft affair, he wrote to a colleague that just as the devil had been active before the first advent 'thus it will be just before our Lords coming againe in his Humane Nature, when he will also dispossesse the Divcls of their Aercal Region to make a new Heaven for his raised there.'[31] Another pastor, John Hale of Beverly, like his European counterparts a century earlier, interpreted witchcraft in apocaljpfic terms, and his colleague at Salem, John Higginson, later recommended Hale’s J *modest enquiry into the nature of witchcraft* as a guide to God’s purpose in ‘letting loose Evil Angels, to make so great a spoyl amongst us as they did, for the punishment of a declining People’.[32]

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[21] I have read Osuna only in a contemporary translation; see Osuna, *Flagellum diaboli,* trans. Egidius Albcrtinus, fos. 2$^{r”}$ (Albcrtinus was secretary to the Privy Council of Duke Maximilian of Bavaria); Maldonado, *Traicte des anges et demons,* fol. 155^{r}.

[24] 1 lorncck, 'An account', in Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus,* 588.

[25] Perkins, *Discourse,* 246.

[24] Holland, *Treatise against witchcraft,* sig. A4^{r}.

[27] Bernard, *Guide to grand-jury men,* 246; Roberts, *Treatise of witchcraft,* sig. A2$^{r''*}$, cf. 3, 67; Cooper, *Mystery ofwitch-craft,* 6. For Bernard's apocalypticism, sec also his *A key of knowledge for the opening of the secret mysteries of St Johns mysticall Revelation* (London, 1617).

[21] Nathaniel Homes, *Daemonologie and theologie* (London, 1650), title-page; cf. id., *A sermon preached afore Thomas Andrews Lord Maior, and the aidermen, sheriffs, etc. of the honorable corporation ofthe citie of London* (London, 1650), 10.

[29] W. M. Lamont, *Richard Baxter and the Millennium: Protestant Imperialism and the English Revolution* (London, 1979), 70, and see also 30-2,42^4, pointing to comparisons with Henry More.

[30] Cotton Mather, *A discourse on the wonders of the invisible world,* in Samuel G. Drake (cd.), *The lFitchcraft Delusion in New England*(3 vols.; New York, 1866, repr. 1970), i. 88.

[31] Cotton Mather to John Richards, Boston, 31 May 1692, in the Mather Papers, *Massachusetts Hist. Soc. Collections,* 4th scr. 8 (1868), 393.

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The means for sustaining these readings of witchcraft events lay in the prophetic books of scripture. The passage that Mather singled out for the sermon on which *The wonders of the invisible world* was partly based was Revelation 12:12 (cited at the head of this chapter). One important reason for the later almost canonical status of this text was its use in the ‘Apologia Auctoris’ that prefaced the *Malleus nialeficarum* and set the eschatological mood of the whole work:

> It is granted that, among the disasters of a declining age, which we do not so much read of as experience cverwhcre, the old East, collapsing under the sentence of his irreparable ruin, has not ceased from the beginning to infect with the various plagues of heresy the church that the new East, Jesus Christ the man, made fruitful by the shedding of his blood. Nevertheless, he seeks this especially at that time when, with the world, in its evening time, declining towards the end and with the growing malice of men, he knows in his great wrath (as John declares in Revelation) that he has only a little time left.[31]

Subsequent authors, too, read Revelation 12:12 not merely as confirmation that the devil’s enmity was a force within human affairs and not beyond them, but as a complete historical explanation of why it had now assumed such menacing proportions. Indeed, the Frankfurt printer Lazar Zctzner, who reissued the *Malleus nialeficarum* in 1588, added his own equally eschatological ‘Praefatio’, linking all forms of demonism and witchcraft to the proximity of the Last Judgement. As Node explained, Satan’s hostility was so much the more inflamed in the later sixteenth century simply because there was less and less time left in which to inflict further injuries on men.[34] It was evidently the Revelation text that James VI and I had in mind when he concluded his *Daenionologie* (1597) by saying that one of the manifest causes of the great increase in witchcraft was that ‘the consummation of the worlde, and our deliverance drawing neare, makes Sathan to rage the more in his instruments, knowing his kingdome to be so neare an ende’.[35] Both Franciscus Agricola, a Catholic priest at Sittard in the duchy of Julich, and Anton Practorius, the preacher

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” John Hale, *A modest enquiry into the nature ofwitchcraft* (1702), in G. L. Burr (cd.), *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648-1706* (New York, 1914), preface, 407, and Higginson’s ‘An epistle to the reader’. For the apocalyptic context of New England witchcraft beliefs, sec David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England,* 2nd cdn. (Cambridge. Mass 1990), 93-4, 101-2, and (on Increase Mather) 104-10.

” [Heinrich Kramer (Institoris) and Jakob Sprcnger], *Malleus nialeficarum* (n.p. [Paris?], n.d. [1510?]), ‘Apologia Auctoris’, sig. ai; this appeared in several later edns., including those of 1520,1580, and 1582, but not in the 1669 cdn. It is not included in the Summers cdn.

[14] Node, *Declamation,* 36.

” James VI and I, *Daemonologie,* 81; his commentary on Revelation waszl *fruitfull meditation, containing a ptaine and easie exposition ...ofthe 7.8. 9. and 10. verses of the 20. chap, of the Revelation* (Edinburgh, 1588).

at Lippstadt in Westphalia, conceded that there had been magicians and witches in every epoch and that the devil's tactics had not changed in what they each regarded as the *Endzeit.* It was the fact that time itself was running out that accounted for the redoubling of his rage and, hence, the scale of the contemporary problem.[36] When the celebrated Lutheran theologian Jacob Heilbronner attempted a brief history of demonic magic (as a prelude to his attack on the medical theories of Johann Pistorius), he too argued that, since Satan had used magicians to oppose God's word in the biblical eras, it was no wonder that the same was true in the sixteenth century, when, 'Knowing the time of judgement to be drawing nigh, he puts forth great wrath and strives with all his force for the overthrow of the truth and the Church of Christ.'[37] Typical in every respect was this comment, inspired by Revelation 12:12, by Marcus Scultctus, the minister of Seehausen in Saxony:

> But in these last times the Devil's nimble cunning and furious malice is much more cruel and terrible than at any time before; for, reeling from the righteous Judgement of Doomsday which is shortly coming to him, when every misfortune that he has ever brought will fall on his head and burn perpetually on his neck, in the short time yet still remaining, he rushes about in a swarm, and, raging and storming like a mad dog, bites and tears about him, thinking to corrupt us in body and soul, that he might only have more to join in his hellish falsehoods and murderous empire.[3*]

At the height of the disruption caused by the military campaigns in Germany, the Saxon preacher Arnold Mongering sought to add to the traditional gallery of demonized occupations and vices—the *tlieatrinn diabolortun*—the category of 'soldier-devil'. The devil, he assured the Elector, was still frantically concocting new forms of demonism in order to enlarge his following and fill his kingdom with souls pending the imminent end of the world.[39]

No contemporary reader would have considered the biblical verse which gave rise to these remarks without reflecting on its context. In the last section of this book we saw that writers on demonology were accustomed to dealing with demonic power as a problem in science and technology, where it was variously interpreted according to the requirements of natural, preternatural, and supernatural causation. But this power also had a historical dimension; it was only ever wielded on divine sufferance, which changed through time. While its moral purpose was constant, its achievements were therefore relative to the stages of a demonomachian account of history. Alphonsus de Spina's demonology, for example, moved from the war in heaven to

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[*] Agricola, *Griindtlicher Bericht,* 63-82, csp. 81(= 80)-84(= 81); Anton Praetorius, *Von Zaubereyund Zauberern, griindlicher Bericht,* 3rd edn. (Heidelberg, 1613), 40-5 (first pub. 1598, under the pseud.: Johann Scultctus).

[37] Qacob Heilbronner], **Daemonomania** P/j/or/årttf (Brunswick, 1601), 6.

” Scultctus, *Praesidium angelicum,* 584-5; cf. David Meder, *Zehen Christliche Busspredigten, uber die Weissagung Christi dess grossest Prophetess, vosn Ende der Welt undjungsten Tage* (Frankfurt/Alain, 1581), sigs. Cii'-Ciii'; Hocker, *Der teufelselbs.* fo. xxxiiii'.

[39] Arnold Mongering, *Perversa ultimiseculimilitia, oder Kriegs-Belial, der Soldaten-TeuJJel, stack Cottes Wort und gemeinem Lauff der letzten Zeit beschriebest,* 2nd edn. (Altenburg in Meissen, 1638), sigs. Aiii'-Aiiii', pp. 82-3.

the war in Revelation, ending with the devil's ultimate return to hell. Other writers on witchcraft turned to the later sections of Revelation and specifically to chapter 20, with its reference to the binding and loosing of Satan. Just what this had left him free to do was, after all, of critical importance to the very premisses of witchcraft theory. For someone as sceptical about the allegations against witches as the Italian lawyer Gianfranccsco Ponzinibio, the death of Christ had removed demonic power from the world altogether; it was simply not available for, say, conveying them to sabbats. Rescuing the credibility of accusations meant adopting the sort of distinction with which the Dominican theologian Bartolommeo Spina, and following him, Pierre Binsfcld, countered Ponzinibio's doubts. The devil was tied by the Passion in the sense that he could no longer enforce the spiritual slavery of mankind incurred by its first parents; but he could certainly still assail men and vex them with tribulations, otherwise Christ's gift of the power to exorcize was in vain. The binding of Satan referred not to the annihilation of demonism but to its limits. The Benedictine monk and later bishop, Leonardo Vairo, likewise argued that Christ had effaced demonic ability to draw even God's chosen into damnation but had only enfeebled demonic enticements to sin, to falling away from the knowledge of God, and to moral ruin.[40]

Important as this point was, however, it left completely open the extent of demonism once its thousand-year chains were loosened. Despite their differences regarding *Satanus ligatus,* witchcraft authors could hardly disagree about *Satanus solutus.* Spina wrote that the devil would reassume his 'full power' in order to achieve an almost total defection from the Church. Binsfcld referred his readers to those passages in *The City of Cod* where Augustine declared that 'in the last and smallest remainder of time shall hce bee loosed: for wee read that hee shall rage in his greatest malice onely three ycarcs and sixe moncthes.'[41] This was the wider apocalyptic framework in which levels of contemporary devilry could be understood. Witchcraft on an unprecedented scale became a perfectly fitting accompaniment to an age in which the historical balance was tilted as far as it could go in the devil's direction without actually breaking the continuity of the faith. It was impossible to deny, thought Node, that Satan was 'unchained in this late season, in this so final and so unhappy an age, when the more the world goes forward, the more each one rushes headlong into the abyss of all impiety'. René Benoist agreed that Satan 'unchained after a thousand years, having blinded us as Samson was by the Philistines, mocks us ... with carnal, licentious pleasures, heresies, black arts, lusts, blasphemies, false opinions'. In a treatise on the allied subject of apparitions and ghosts, another French Catholic writer, Noel 1 aillepicd, explained that, although evil spirits had been consigned to the bottomless pit, there were still some who were capable of bringing hell to earth, moreoxcr, after the thousand years be finished, Satan must be loosed a little time, and by God's permission, he shall go forth and seduce the nations.'[42]

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[40] Ponzinibio, *De lamiis* in Grillando, *Tractatus duo.* 274-5; Bartolommeo Spina, *Apologia' in Ponzimbium de lamns* in *Malleus maleficarum* (1669 cdn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 1). 168; Binsfcld, *Tractatus.* 8-16; Vairo, *De fa*setno' 78"?' Cf* on Revelation 20 and divine permission of witchcraft and demonism, Del Rio, *Disquisitionum magicarum.* 221; Jean Filesac, *De idololatria magica. dissertatio* (Paris 1609) fos 3'-8'; Rem. P.chard,*Ah,rM venudes sainclsexorcisme, sur /« princes d'enfer possedan.s riellerneht venueuse demoiselle Elisabeth de Ranfaing* (Nancy, 1622), 50.

[41] Binsfcld, *Traclatus.* 15-16; Augustine, *Citie of God.* 801.

Resorting to the theme of *Scitanus solutus* was, therefore, a further way of expressing the sheer extent of demonic operations in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. Implicitly or otherwise it committed writers on witchcraft to a view of the whole narrative of history. Some adopted the chronology inferred by Node in which the unchaining was a fresh or imminent event and its duration an aspect of the foreseeable future. To Crcspct it seemed that his own age was the one when the devil's fury should be unleashed from its bonds onto the world in a flood of magical practices. The same view was held by Vincent Pons, theologian and professor at Aix-en-Provence, who in 1612 dedicated a treatise on the power and knowledge possessed by demons to the president of the provincial *parlement,* Guillaume Du Vair. According to Pons the reign of the devil would come 'at the end of the age that is now beginning to run out'. The expiry of the thousand-year imprisonment would be in effect the consummation of time itself. The German Jesuit Adam Tanner did not suggest that the end of things was imminent but he shared the view (citing Revelation 20) that not all historical epochs were equally subject to demonic incursions. Just as the first advent of Christ had put an end to an age of demonically inspired idolatry, so his second advent and the Last Judgement would be preceded by a last age of Lucifcrian tyranny.[43]

Protestants, with one eye on the history of the Roman Church, tended to adopt a longer perspective. Christ had curbed the devil-worship that was rife among the Gentiles but, according to George Gifford, the binding of Satan had lasted only for a literal millennium, whereupon, 'being let loose againc hee seduced the world: yea he was the means, and it was by the cfficacic of his power, that Antichrist the Pope and his false religion was set up.' William Perkins's editor, Thomas Pickering, agreed that the re-establishing of Satan's kingdom could be traced historically 'toward the expiration of those [thousand] ycarcs, when corruption began to creepe into the Papacie; when the Bishops affected that Sec, and aspired unto it by Diabolicall arts'. For such writers the history of witchcraft was inseparably bound up with the fortunes of the Protestant faith, and the historical patterns which they found in demonology were necessarily those derived from a wider polemic.[44]

For the Huguenot Perrault these patterns were yet more flexible. For a thousand years Satan had been prevented from embroiling the nations in wars and slaughter. Thereafter, Perrault's Protestantism told him, as it had told his English counterparts, that a newly unfettered demonism was responsible for the machinations of Rome—hence the violent armed conflicts for world sovereignty between the contrary forces of Mohammedanism (Gog) and Catholicism under Boniface VIII (Magog) which had begun at the turn of the thirteenth century. As for his own times, here Perrault's eschatological interests diverged. The needs of polemic led him to the claim that with the coming of the Reformation Satan had been bound a second time in 1517, when the true religion had begun to flourish in Europe. On the other hand, the fear of witchcraft suggested to him the continuation of Satanic power unabated; 'as it has been foretold that with the approach of the final advent of the Son of God Satan will be unloosed, so we can say with good reason that if ever he was unloosed it is now.'[45]

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[42] Node, *Declamation,* 32, see also 43; Benoist, *Petit fragment,* 18; Taillepied, *Treatise of Ghosts,* 118.

[41] Crcspet, *Deux Livres,* fos. 114*-15; Pons, *Depotentia et scientia daemonum,* 12-14; Tanner, *Depotentia locomotiva angelorumf)!.*

[44] George Gifford, *A discourse of the subtill practises ofdevilles by witches and sorcerers* (London, 1587), sig. Di'; Perkins, *Discourse,* 'Epistle Dcdicatorie', sig. ^7*.

Thus a view of history was made an integral part of orthodox demonology. The activities of witches were not so many random products of individual malice. They were intelligible in terms of a progression of events that embraced not merely the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but (in principle) universal time itself. There was no deeper consolation for churchmen than the knowledge that witchcraft was a manifestation of divine prearrangements.

* * *

When late in the seventeenth century the Mecklenburg preacher Michael Freudius came to write his encyclopaedic guide to the judicial and penal aspects of witchcraft, he thought it appropriate to include commentaries on* Revelation in his extensive bibliography. He might just as easily have recommended the secondary literature on the Epistles, for here too in the New Testament witchcraft writers drew ample support for their eschatology. At the opening of chapter 4 of Paul's first letter to Timothy they noticed the declaration 'that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy*. In the second letter they found the unrighteousness of the last days, with its unnatural and disorderly inversions of moral and social codes, compared specifically with the resistance offered to Moses by the magicians of Pharaoh. In one of the most widely examined texts of all, 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul warned that Christ's second coming would be heralded by a general apostasy. Sin would achieve its ultimate personification in the blasphemous demands of a quintessentially evil being 'whose coming is after the working of Satan'. The ungodly would pay for their transgressions by being deceived by his 'lying wonders' and other delusions. In these passages all manner of corroborative allusions could be seen to the elements of false worship present in rites of witchcraft. We shall see how they were used in particular to enrich the central themes of radical ambiguity and prodigiousness in accounts of demonic effects. What for the moment is important is the further evidence for the inherently demonological character of history in its final phase.

It was used routinely, for example, by Adrianus Rheynmannus when posing the usual question about God's toleration of demonic incursions down the ages. His response is the one from Thessalonians and Timothy—that unheedfulness and ingratitude are being repaid with delusions and damnation, and, specifically, that the moral havoc prophesied for the last times has taken the form of papal enslavement of popular spirituality. As Lutheran pastor of Meyden, Rheynmannus hopes that the devil will not seduce the godly with such appearances of true worship. William Perkins, whose *Fruitful dialogue concerning the end of the world* (1587) revealed his cautious commitment to an eschatology shorn of any populist overtones, also thought that the advice to the Thessalonians explained why ‘God suffereth the practices of Witchcraft, to be so rife in these our daics’. Likewise, Thomas Cooper argued that Paul’s description of those who refused to accept the truth could be applied to the stubbornness with which his contemporaries rejected the gospel. In their case the punishing delusions were those which led them to seek help from ‘Blcssers, and good Witches, as wee call them, who being commonly ignorant, prophane, and superstitious, prove verie dangerous instruments for the restoring and encrease of the Kangdome of Antichrist’. It is hardly surprising that such a text was searched by the millenarian Homes for what he called the ‘Prognostick Antecedents’ of the second coming. What is noteworthy is his decision to draw out the implications of its account of doctrinal apostasy in a study of the practices of magic, witchcraft, and astrology and their symbolic dimension. As the epistle to Timothy made clear, the full latitude of the sin of apostasy could only be appreciated in a demonological setting.[46]

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[45] Perrault, *Demonologie,* 60-2.

In fact 2 Thessalonians 2 was the source for so many explanations of witchcraft that it deserves to rank with those other biblical texts that have always been seen as seminal for European beliefs on the subject—Exodus 22:18 (‘Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live’), 1 Samuel 28 (Saul and the witch of Endor), and so forth. The Frenchman Node thought it sufficiently central to his arguments for verses 9-10 to be placed on his title-page, but there is a sense in which this choice symbolized its importance to the whole tradition of demonology. It was epigrammatic to this collective text, so to speak, as well as to individual writings like Node’s. Exegesis was not, of course, always explicitly eschatological. Yet unless the events of which Paul spoke were thought of allegorically as merely moments in the spiritual development of individuals, they could only be regarded as historically final. Whenever writers resorted to this passage to explain some aspect of the nature and incidence of contemporary demonism and witchcraft, they were in effect situating them towards the end of a temporal progression culminating in what Paul called the ‘day of Christ’. In some instances, this is in any case supported by evidence of a wider interest in eschatological history. Heinrich Bullinger’s published sermons on Revelation enjoyed great popularity, and he was also the author of two works on the end of the world and the Last Judgement, as well as a commentary on 2 Thessalonians itself. Although he repeatedly warned that the day of the Lord was imminent, his incursion into witchcraft studies, written in 1571, seems unrelated to these other writings and makes no direct reference to his highly developed eschatology. Yet when he asks why God allows the black arts to flourish it is Paul’s brief account of apostasy and Satanism that is invoked; and in this way witchcraft is brought well within the compass of his historical thought.[47] Even without this sort of collateral knowledge, we ought to be more alert to citations from 2 Thessalonians. While never as influential as Daniel or Revelation, either in the periodization of Christian history or in depictions of the themes of struggle and victory, it established the moral economy of the last times and it spoke emphatically about the deceptive attractiveness of demonic effects to those steeped in a terminal unrighteousness. When a writer like Osuna uses it to emphasize the height of idolatry in those who serve the devil, or like Hermann Samson to capture the scale of the punishments which God inflicts on mankind through magicians, it is this broader eschatological framework that needs to be borne in mind.[43]

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[46] Rheynmannus, *Christlich und nothwendig Gesprdch.* 110; Perkins, *Discourse.* 39; Cooper, *Mystery of witch-craft.* 4; Homes, *A sermon preached afore Thomas Andrews LordMaior.* 4-5.

The same is true with regard to the figure of the Antichrist, universally seen as the real subject of Paul’s description and a vital focus for eschatological expectations. The frequency with which it appears in the pages of demonology is a yet further indication of the extent to which its authors shared these expectations. Jean Le Normant believed that by the time he began writing about witchcraft Antichrist had actually been born—in 1611. In Ponzinibio, as well as his assailants Spina and Binsfeld, in Adam Tanner (who later published a specialist work defending the Papacy from the charge of antichristianism), Vincent Pons, Rene Bcnoist, and Pierre Node, the concurrence between the final loosing of Satan and the coming of the Antichrist’s persecutions is taken for granted. Throughout the Protestant demonologies of Germany and England it is axiomatic. In 1563 the Netherlands poet, the Catholic Robert Du Tricz published a dialogue dealing with demonic imposture in the context of the debate about sacred images and their place in religious worship. He had been encouraged to tackle the subject of evil spirits after finding that his own views coincided with those of Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and Isidore in their accounts of the downfall of Rome, the coming of the Antichrist, and the dissolution of the world. For instance, Isidore’s association of the Antichrist with a decline in the vigour and credit of the church could be applied to Satan’s current onslaught on the faithful and the emergence of the sects. Du Triez used demonology to warn of the apocalyptic dangers in Protestantism. Restored for a short while before the end, Satan had deceived the church’s enemies but would drag them with him into the apocalyptic lake of fire and brimstone.[49] The views of the lawyer Pierre Masse of Le Mans were yet more clear-cut. Given the extraordinary increase of magicians and sorcerers there was a danger that, having recovered their former strength, they would also recapture their original, unlimited tyranny as persecutors of the godly. With the unchaining of the devil after his millennium of restraint and the approach of the world’s, end they would join forces with the Antichrist as they had formerly done with Julian the Apostate, one of the Antichrist’s historical prefigurations, in order to become his apostles and agents.[50]

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[47] I'Icinrich Bullinger, *Of the end of the world, and judgement ofour Lord Jesus Christ to come.* trans. T. Potter (London, 1580[?]), sigs. An’, Gi’, cf. Hiii’-Hiv', Ji’; id., *Von hexen und unholden wider die Schwartzen kunst, aberglaubigs segnen, unwarhajftigs H'arsagen, und andere dergleichen von Gott verbottne Kunst,* in *Theatrum de veneficis.* 298-306, esp. 304.

” Osuna, *Flagellum diaboli,* fo. 2’; Samson, *Neun ... hexen predigt,* sig. E2~ Cf. Conrad Wolffgang Platz A«r/«r, *Nottwend.ger, unnd Wollgegrundter berieht, Auch Christentliche vermanung. von der Grewhehen. ,n alter Welt gebreuchhchen Zauberey, Siind dem Zauberischen Beschworen und Segensprechen* (n.p., 1565), sigs. Fu’-Fui’; Mason, *Anatomic ofsorcery,* 12 ff.; Daneau, *Dialogue of witches* sig Dv'.

” DuTnez, *Ruses.finesses.et impostures des esprits matins,* Dedication, sigs. A2’-A3'. ’

Henri Boguet was another who judged that he was living in the time of the Antichrist, ‘since, among the signs that arc given of his arrival, this is one of the chief, namely that witchcraft shall then be rife throughout the world’. Martin Del Rio cited in support of the reality of the witches’ sabbat the view of St Hippoly tus, in his eschatological work *Demonstrate de Christo et Antichristo,* that similar conventions, where unbelievers worshipped devils and denied their faith, would mark the time of the Antichrist. So too did Jude Serclicr, to reinforce the idea that such denials by witches inevitably required the rejection of the spiritual benefits of their baptism, when demonic evil had been exorcized from them as infants. Serclier, a canon regular of one of the minor orders, was another who combined eschatology and demonology; he was author of a lengthy verse account of the last days, entitled *Le grand tombeau du monde, ou jugement final* (1606), as well as the treatise £ z'fwnWewo;/ *historial* of 1609.[51] Moreover, the link that he and Del Rio were seeking to establish could be found not only in Hippolytus but in Michael Pscllus, the eleventh-century Byzantine philosopher whose work on the operations of demons, widely cited in the early modern period, helped to transmit pagan stereotypes dealing with moral and social subversion into the Christian literature of devil-worship and witchcraft. The sexual promiscuity, infanticide, and cannibalism reported in the rites of the Bogomiles were here regarded as fitting signs of the end of things; ‘for now Antichrist is at hand, even at the doors, and evil precursors in the shape of monstrous doctrines and unlawful practices, no better than the orgies of Bacchus, must usher in his advent.’[52]

In early modern demonology, magicians and witches were in fact the precursors of the Antichrist, part of Satan’s preparations for his arrival. The same demon who, in 1610, warned Michaelis and his exorcists of the end of the world also confirmed that magicians were ‘the forerunners and Prophets of Antichrist’. In England, witchcraft was also seen as ‘a maine proppe and hope for the upholding and continuance’ of the Antichrist’s authority. The two terms were, indeed, interchangeable. Witchcraft was a great sin, wrote John Gaulc in 1646, because ‘a Witch is an Antichrist, opposite to Christ not only in his Works, but in his Person; for as Christ is a God incarnate: so is a Witch (as it were) a Divell incarnate. I do not say, a Witch is the Antichrist; but I am sure, the Antichrist must needs be a Witch.’[53] Pierre Node, as we might expect, pursued these themes most relentlessly. Magic was the second beast of Revelation 13 (the first was the Antichrist, ‘principal leader of all enchanters’), and the magicians of Pharaoh its two horns. Magic and witchcraft had continued among those kingdoms prefigured by the beast’s appearance, but now that the Antichrist had duly arrived, they would flourish as never before. Magicians and witches took up their craft to establish themselves as ‘supreme servants and leading vassals of the Antichrist’, and they were his ‘forerunners, supports, ministers, and preachers’. In addition they, and the modern heretics allied to them, were the false prophets spoken of by Christ dedicated to keeping the world in error and promoting violence against the saints. Finally, they combined all the sins and apostasies of those last ‘perilous times’ spoken of by Paul to Timothy; ‘their barbarous deeds, their impudent gestures, their dissoluteness, their traitorous designs, their execrable actions, their vain purposes... are in agreement with what the Apostle says.’[54] Nodé left no text unturned in his attempt to synchronize the history of witchcraft with the intricate mythologies of prophecy. He was certainly an advocate of witch-hunting, but only because he was a hunter of the Antichrist as well.

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[50] *Misti, De l'imposture, fas.* 119"*, see also 13', 9 P, 146'.

[51] Boguet, *Examen of Witches,* p. xlvii; Del Rio, *Disquisitionum magicarum,* 89; Serclier, *LAntidemon historial,* 235. On Hippolytus, see also Crespct, *Deux Livres,* fo. 244’.

[52] Michael Pscllus, *Psellus* Dialogue on the Operation of Daemons,* trans. M. Collisson (Sydney, 1843), 26; cf. Cohn, *Europe* ’r *Inner Demons,* 18-19.

[51] Michaelis, *Admirable historic,* 299; Cooper, *Mystery of witch-craft,* 6-7; Gaule, *Cases of conscience,* 20-1 (citing 2 Thessalonians 2).

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[54] Nodé, *Declamation,* 11-22; cf. on Naudcscc Ch. 25 below.

22

Eschatology

> Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.
>
> (1 Timothy 4:1)

> [The world] is not oncly in the staggering and declining age, but, which exceedeth dotage, at the very upshot, and like a sicke man which lyeth at deaths doore, ready to breath out the laste ghaspe.
>
> (John Dove, *Sermon ... intreating ofthe second comming of Christ)*

IT is clear that, in so far as history was brought to bear on the problem of witchcraft, this was by virtue of an overwhelmingly eschatological account of events. The activities of demons and witches were apocalyptic both because they could be matched with descriptions of the last times lying encoded in the prophetic texts of scripture, and because, in their turn, they too were texts which, when suitably analysed, might reveal truths about the nature and nearness of the world's end. But what of this view of history itself? The fact that writers on witchcraft consistently adopted it naturally tells us something about the internal coherence of their ideas; but it throws little light on the wider issue of whether or not demonology was set in the mainstream of conventional European thought. Was it, then, bizarre for witchcraft writers to regard their subject and their times in these terms or was their historical perspective typical and usual—indeed, unexceptional? Was an eschatological reading of early modern affairs merely an intellectual oddity or a generally received orthodoxy?

Some years ago these questions could not have been answered with any confidence. Within the confines of a conventional rationalism long dominant among historians they had not often seemed worth posing. Speculations about the end of the world and the character of the last times were so inherently implausible—not to say fantastic—that they could safely be neglected. Nor was attention, when it came, always even-handed. Concentration was given to one form of eschatology—millenarian expectations of salvation and social bliss in a perfect age to come. And the millennium 'pursued' in Norman Cohn's seminal study was one with unusually violent and anarchic implications. Even in the general context of medieval dissent, those who sought it were admitted to be 'exceptional and extreme', their wild hopes for a new society fuelled by radical anxiety and disorientation. The stress was accordingly on the mythical character of the beliefs and the psycho-pathological or sociopathological conditions in which they flourished.[1]

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[1] Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit ofthe Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (London, 1957; repr. 1970), *passim* (quotation at 10).

Thereafter, the features of millenarianism that continued to attract notice were its expression of protest and its relation to abnormalities in thought and behaviour. The assumption that it was inherently heterodox led to an emphasis on those settings—Florence in the 1490s,[2] Münster in the 1530s,[2] and, above all, London in the decades of Civil War and Interregnum[4]—in which militant challenges were mounted against contemporary values and institutions. Programmes for social and political reform, or even revolution, were taken to be the authentic expression of millenarian hopes, and some form of crisis, personal or collective, was thought to be the occasion for them. This pattern of interest was, if anything, more marked among sociologists and anthropologists. In non-European and non-Christian contexts too, millenarian beliefs appeared as vehicles for possibly violent protest following the strains and dislocations brought by colonial acculturation.[5] 'Millennialism' was used to describe the way deviant religious sects conceived of the complete transformation of their world by supernatural agency.[6] One attempt at a typology stressed the heretical and revolutionary elements in most millenarian ideologies and their reflection of some form of acute deprivation. Another survey of approaches to the subject, while itself wary of the stress on preconditions of abnormality and disturbance, recorded the popularity of explanations couched in terms of social protest, deprivation, and chronic tension.[7]

The difficulty here has not only been the misrepresenting of early modern millenarianism itself. After all, the sober academics and clergymen of early seventeenth-century Germany and England who came to believe that the thousand-year period mentioned in Revelation lay wholly in the near future certainly do not conform to the pattern. Men like Brightman, Alsted, Mede, and their early English followers were highly respectable chiliasts.[8] The Fifth Monarchists mounted a vigorous vocal challenge to the regime of Oliver Cromwell but they did so in the name of austerely Pentateuchal values. What has been more misleading is the impression given that millenarianism was the only really significant form which eschatology might take. Those who thought seriously about the end of the world were, in consequence, assumed to be a rather restricted group whose views and behaviour warranted a special kind of explanation.

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[2] Donald Weinstein, 'Millenarianism in a Civic Setting: The Savonarola Movement in Florence', in Sylvia L. Thrupp (ed.), *Millennial Dreams in Action: Studies in Revolutionary Religious Movements* (The Hague, 1962), 187-203; id., *Savonarola and Florence: Prophecy and Patriotism in the Renaissance* (Princeton, 1970).

[3] G. H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (3rd edn.; Kirksville, Mo., 1992), 553-88, see also 505-23; cf. more recently, Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton,* 19 (on Melchior Hofmann); Walter Klaascn, *Living at the End of the Ages: Apocalyptic Expectation in the Radical Reformation* (London, 1992).

[4] Leo F. Soft, 'The Fifth Monarchy Men: Politics and the Millennium', *Church Hist.* 30 (1961), 314-24; B. S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-Century English Millenarianism* (London, 1972).

[5] See, for example, Peter Worslcy, *The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of 'Cargo' Cults in Melanesia* (London, 1957), esp. 221-56; R. Kaufmann, *Millenarisme et acculturation* (Brussels, 1964); Michael Adas, *Prophets of Rebellion: Millenarian Protest Movements against the European Colonial Order* (Chapel Hill, NC,

[6] The classic account is Bryan R. Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium: A Sociological Study of Religious Movements of Protest among Tribal and Third-World Peoples* (London, 1973), see esp. 19-26.

[7] Yonina Talmon, 'Pursuit of the Millennium: The Relation between Religious and Social Change', *Archives européennes de sociologie,* 3 (1962), 125—48; Sylvia L. Thrupp, 'Millennial Dreams in Action: A Report on the Conference Discussion', in ead. (ed.), *Millennial Dreams in Action,* 11-27. For a critical account of studies of millenarianism in these terms, see Karen E. Fields, *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa* (Princeton, 1985), 15-23.

[8] B. G. Cooper, 'The Academic Re-discovery of Apocalyptic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century', *Baptist Quart.* 18 (1959-60), 351-62, and 19 (1961-2), 29-34; Peter Toon, 'The Latter-Day Glory', and

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In the light of so many fresh studies of the historical thought of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries we can now see that this was a serious mistake. Taken together, these reveal an extraordinary diffusion of eschatological expectations, the most representative of which were not, strictly speaking, millenarian at all, but straightforwardly apocalyptic—that is to say, they were based on beliefs concerning the appearance of the Antichrist, the second advent, the resurrection of the dead, the end of the world, and the Last Judgement. In this context, the millennium was either placed entirely in the past, as the literal duration of Satan's binding by the power of Passion and Gospel, or taken to symbolize the complete history of the church militant—both alternatives yielding what has been called an 'amillennial' or 'historical' reading of apocalyptic prophecy. At the same time, inspiration was derived from theological and ecclesiastical controversy and not from any desire to implement other kinds of far-reaching social or political change. Accordingly, we now have access to a much fuller range of eschatological thought and to its importance in all manner of cultural settings.

The notion of the Antichrist, alone, has been shown to have had an enormous extension in early modern Europe, a result no doubt of its protean character and the directness of its appeal at every level of society.[9] Bishop Jewel's remark that 'there is none, neither old nor young, neither learned nor unlearned, but he hath heard of antichrist' was evidently not an exaggeration of the situation in areas of Protestant influence by the 1580s.[10] The pious had evidently taken to heart the advice of one Zwinglian theologian who wrote that, in the last days, they should 'searche, and weighe the hole universall busynese of Antichrist'.[11] Naturally, the fresh anti-Papal polemic turned the Antichrist from an individual into an institution, with a history stretching back to the thirteenth, or even tenth centuries (the *end* of the millennium). Yet alongside this persisted the medieval Catholic expectations, themselves wholly

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R. G. Clouse, 'The Rebirth of Millenarianism', both in Peter Toon (ed.), *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology 1600 to 1660* (Cambridge, 1970), 23-65. But see Evans, *Making of the Habsburg Monarchy*, 395-9, on radical chiliasm and the measures taken against it in the Habsburg lands.

[9] Most of the studies I cite in this chapter have something to say about Antichrist beliefs, but see esp. Hans Preuss, *Die Vorstellungen vom Antichrist im Späteren Mittelalter, bei Luther und in der Konfessionnellen Polemik* (Leipzig, 1906); Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1971); Dubois, *Conception de l'histoire en France,* 501-73; Delumeau, *La Peur,* 197-231; R. K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages* (Manchester, 1981), 20^-37.

[10] John Jewel, *An exposition upon the two Epistles of Sainct Paule to the Thessalonians* (1583), in *The Works of John Jewel Bishop of Salisbury,* ed. John Ayre (Cambridge, 1847), pt. 2,902.

[11] Walther, *Antichrist,* fo. 26'.

orthodox and traditional in origin, of a single, supremely evil oppressor whose life and deeds would parody those of Christ. Indeed, wherever they were located by the controversialists of the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, the key attributes of ‘antichristianism’ remained constant—on the one hand, tyranny and all-embracing persecution, and on the other, a mocking and counterfeit religiosity. We therefore find the figure of the Antichrist everywhere—as an item of visual propaganda,[12] * as the subject of individual *vitae''*, as a stage persona in religious moralities and dramas,[14] as the topic of dispute in countless sermons, pamphlets, and treatises,[15] even as the subject ofastronomical and astrological speculation.[16]The leading French Catholic expert on the Antichrist, Florimond de Raemond, wrote that the subject embraced everything over which Protestants and Catholics disagreed. On the Protestant side it was said that ‘the controversie betwixt us and the Papists concerneth him.’[17] It is not too much to say that the Antichrist loomed as a threat and, occasionally, an obsession over the whole of the religious life and thought of the period.

All the same, the need to identify the Antichrist’s whereabouts would not itself have been such a vital matter without more general hopes and apprehensions concerning the last times. W. M. Lamont was the first to argue that these were constitutive of the normal beliefs and actions of reformed churches, rather than remaining incidental to them—a point which, in the case of English Protestantism, became fully established in the writings of Bryan Ball, Richard Bauckham, Paul Christianson, and Katharine Firth.” What has so often seemed to be merely propagandist or even obscurantist in the Antichrist debate can now be seen to have rested eventually on a conception of history which was not only internally coherent but essential both to the very idea of adopting new religious forms in England and to the conviction that they would ultimately triumph. The advent of the Antichrist was taken as the surest of many signs that the struggles of the English Reformation were part of the last and decisive confrontation between good and evil described in Revelation; just as its necessary corollary, the second advent of Christ, guaranteed their outcome. In these circumstances, the notion that the Pope was the Antichrist could provide 'the central organising principle for a whole view of the world'.[19] It can no longer disconcert us, then, to find that the expectation of imminent dissolution was a 'universal Protestant belief or that English religious thought was preoccupied with the events of the last days; 'at no other time in England's history', writes Bryan Ball, 'has the doctrine of the second advent been so widely proclaimed or so readily accepted.'[20] What were England's were necessarily New England's expectations too; both the early settlers and, later, their historians (especially Cotton Mather) saw the Massachusetts venture in apocalyptic and, occasionally, millenarian terms.[21]

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[12] Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk,* 148—63.

'' Karin Boveland, Christoph Peter Burger, and Ruth Steffen (eds.), *Der Antichrist unddie Funfzehn Zeichen vor dem Jungsten Gericht* (Hamburg, 1979), for a facsimile of the first typographic edition of the block book *vitae* of the Antichrist, Strasburg, *c.* 1480.

[14] M. J. Rud win, *Der Teufel in den deutschen geistlichen Spielen des Mittelalters und der Reformationszeit* (Göttingen, 1915), 64-7; Klaus Aichele, *Das Antichristdrama des Mittelalters, der Reformation und Gtgen-rr/onna/Zon* (The Hague, 1974), 51-106.

[11] There is a convenient survey, with extracts and summaries, of the 16th- and 17th-c. Spanish Antichrist material in Alba (ed.), *Del Antichristo,* 189-274.

[14] Thorndike, *History of Magic, v.* 124,179,202,221,311.

[17] Raemond, *L'Anlichrist,* 11; Sohn, *Briefe and learned treatise,* 2. A convenient summary of the Catholic tradition on the Antichrist is given (in a defence of the Papacy from the charge of antichristianism) by Sanders, *De visibili monarchia ecclesiae,* 715-808. For equally convenient examples of its point-by-point Protestant refutation, sec William Fulke, *A Discovery of the dangerous rock of the Popish Church* (1580), in *Fulke's Answers to Stapleton, Martial!, and Sanders,* ed. Richard Gibbings (London, 1848), 366—93; John Foxc, *Eicasmi seu meditationes, in sacram Apocalypsin* (London, 1587), 226-72; William Whitaker, *Ad Nicolai Sanderi demonstrationes quadraginta ... responsio* (London, 1583). For full-scale Catholic treatment, sec bk. 3 of Bellarmine, *Tractatus de potestate summi pontificis,* 572-626; cf. Jodocus Coccius, *Thesaurus Catholicus, in quo controversiaefidei... explicantur,* ed. Laurentius Trivius (2 vols.; Cologne, 1600-1), ii. 1057-72. For standard Protestant replies to Bellarmine, see Robert Abbot, *Anttchristi demonstratio, contra fabulas pontificias et tneptam Roberti Be liarmini de Antichristo disputationem* (London, 1603); Thomas Brightman, *A revelation of the apocalyps, that is the Apocalyps ofS. John* (Amsterdam, 1611), 492-597.

[11] William M. Lamont, *Godly Rule: Politics and Religion, 1603-1660* (London, 1969); Bryan W. Ball, *A Great Expectation: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660* (Leiden,* 1975); Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse: Sixteenth-Century Apocalypticism, Millenarianism and the EnglishReformationfrom John Bale to John Foxe and Thomas Brightman* (Abingdon, Oxon., 1978); P. K. Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War*

German Lutheranism too was, in effect, an applied eschatology, making the imminence of the Last Judgement almost a matter of doctrine, intensifying the themes of warning, punishment, and repentance, and creating a society 'thoroughly imbued with expectations of enormous upheaval and the end of the world'.[22] In the 1520s eschatological themes were already prominent in the sermons preached by urban pastors,[22] and helped to give the evangelical movement its early impetus

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(Toronto, 1978); Katherine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530-16J5* (Oxford, 1979). The various essays in Patrides and Wittreich (cds.), *The Apocalypse* are rich in relevant materials. Foramorcrecent account, sec Richard Helgcrson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (London, 1992), 247-68, and for the persistence of millenarianism in the 17th and 18th c., see Richard H. Popkin (cd.), *Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought, 1650-1800* (Leiden, 1988), csp. 1-11. The links between eschatology and the theme of the decay of nature in English writing arc explored by Harris, *All Coherence Gone,* 1-7. For apocalypticism in Scottish Calvinism, see Arthur H. Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI: The Apocalypse, the Union and the Shaping of Scotland's Public Culture* (Edinburgh, 1979), 20-38:1 cannot agree with Williamson's argument (p. 54) that 'the link between the Christian time sequence and witchcraft could never be more than an extremely tangential one.'

” P. Lake, 'The Significance of the Early-Modern Identification of the Pope as Antichrist', *J. Ecclesiastical Hist.* 31 (1980), 161,165-6,175 (quotation at 161).

[20] Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men,* 25; Ball, *Great Expectation,* 232. For much the same finding, sec Walter B. Stone, 'Shakespeare and the Sad Augurs',*'J. English and Germanic Philology,* 52 (1953), 462.

[21] J. F. Maclear, 'New England and the Fifth Monarchy: The Quest for the Millennium in Early American Puritanism', *William and Mary Quart.* 3rdser., 32 (1975), 223-60; Stephen J. Stein, 'Transatlantic Extensions: Apocalyptic in Early New England', in Patrides and Wittreich (eds.), *The Apocalypse,* 266-98.

[22] R. B. Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Stanford, Calif., 1988), 2 and *passim;* Barnes speaks of a level of apocalyptic expectation in 16th-c. Germany 'that finds few parallels in Western history' (pp. 2-3). Cf. Preuss, *Vorstellungen vom Antichrist,* 83-247; Peuckert, *Die Grosse Wende;* Johannes Janssen, *History ofthe German People at the Close ofthe Middle Ages,* trans. A. M. Christie and M. A. Mitchell (17 vols.; London, 1896-1925), xii. 228-77; Delumcau, *Sin and Fear, 523-36.*

[22] Bemd Moeller, 'Was wurde in der Friihzeit dcr Reformation in den dcutschcn Stiidten gepredigt?, *Archiv fur Reformationsgeschichte,* 75 (1984), 184. For one Lutheran pastor's eschatology, see Gerald

throughout Germany. Eventually, they became the speciality of the GnesioLutherans of Jena and Tübingen who 'popularized an apocalyptic theology among broad segments of the populace'.[24] But intense apocalyptic fervour was a continuous element in Lutheranism for at least a century, becoming more populist and millenarian during the cataclysms of the mid-seventeenth century, before merging with early pietism. As for Lutheran doctrine, the association of the Papacy with the Antichrist was included in the articles endorsed at Schmalkalden in 1537 and incorporated into the Book of Concord of 1580.

Luther himself was entirely committed to an eschatological account of history, so much so that 'Luther the Apocalyptic' has been said to stand at the centre of his self-image. For him the Reformation was a terminal event, accompanied by understandable antichristian persecution, and he was its forerunner and prophet.[25] In Lutheran hagiography he became the flying angel of Revelation 14: 6, 'having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth'. Although Calvin, by comparison, was not an enthusiastic exponent of prophetic history, from French-speaking Calvinism we still have the influential eschatologies of men like Theodore Beza, Pierre Viret, Augustin Marlorat, Lambert Dancau, George Pacard, and Nicolas Vignier. As the early seventeenth-century theologian Zanchy wrote, 'this question hath and doth at this day put many to business.'[26]

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By comparison Catholic eschatology of the same period, at least among intellectuals, seems less insistent.[27] There was no initial occasion to conduct an offensive argument on the grounds that history was about to close, and every reason to deflect the charge of papal antichristianism by deferring the arrival of the Antichrist. It became usual for the major polemicists—for instance, the Jesuits Robert Bellarmine, Francis Rib-

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Strauss, 'The Mental World of a Saxon Pastor', in Peter Newman Brooks (ed.), *Reformation Principle and Practice: Essays in Honour of A. G. Dickens (London,* 1980), 168-9 (he owned a copy of Musculus, *Londes Teujfels Tyranney).*

[21] R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550-1750* (London, 1989), 29, and see also 12-14,24,112-13, on which my following remarks are based.

[21] The classic account is Heiko A. Oberman, 'Martin Luther—Vorläufcr der Reformation', in E. Jüngel, J. Wallmann, and W. Werbeck (eds.), *Lerifikationen: Festschrift fir Gerhard Ebeling zum 70. Geburtstag* (Tübingen, 1982), 91-119; cf. id., *Luther: Between God and the Devil,* trans. Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (London, 1989),/>arnm; Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis,* 36-53. The phrase 'Luther the Apocalyptic' occurs in Heiko A. Oberman, 'The Impact of the Reformation: Problems and Perspectives', in E. I. Kouri and Tom Scott (eds.), *Politics and Society in Reformation Europe (London,* 1987), 21. Luther's theological and polemical use of Revelation is summarized by Jaroslav Pclikan, 'Some Uses of Apocalypse in the Magisterial Reformers', in Patrides and Wittrcich (eds.), *The Apocalypse,* 74-92.

“ Hieronymus Zanchy, *Speculum christianum, or a Christian survey for the conscience,* trans. H. Nelson (London, 1614), 1 (in his own tract , 'Of the end of the world'). Cf. Theodore Beza, *Exposition sur/'Apocalypse de Samel Jean* (n.p., 1557); Pierre Viret, *Le Monde d Pempire et le monde demoniaclefait par dialogues* (Geneva, 1561); Augustin Marlorat, *A catholike exposition upon the Revelation ofSaintJohn,* trans. A. Golding (London, 1574); Dancau, *Treatise touching Antichrist;* Pacard, *Description de l'Antechrist;* Nicolas Vignier, *Theatre de l'Antechrist* (n.p., 1610). For further items, see Dubois, *La Conception de l'histoire,* 609-14.

[27] For the absolutely standard and uncontentious Catholic version of the *vita antichristi,* see Joannes de Combis, *Compendium lolius theologicae veritatis* (Lyons, 1602), 589-605 (many earlier edn's.).

era, and Braz Viegas—to recommend Augustine’s caution regarding precise knowledge of such matters, to deride Lutheran alarmism concerning the Day of Judgement, and to suggest that the last times were still some way off.[28] This adoption of a, so to speak, non-political reading of apocalyptic prophecy may well have had a quelling and pacifying effect.[29] Nevertheless, Catholics of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, like Pierre d’Ailly, Nicolas de Clamanges, Manfred of Vercelli, Francesco De Insulis, and, above all, the Catalan Dominican preacher, Vincent Ferrer, had thought quite differently, and Catholicism therefore inherited its own lively expectations regarding the imminence of the end.[30] As early into the new century as 1513, the fifth Lateran council pronounced a ban on preaching that the Antichrist was imminent.

Priests and writers of a lesser stature than Bellarmine often took a more positive line. The prophetism and acute sense of anxiety that suffused French Catholicism before and during the Wars of Religion was fuelled by all kinds of reflection about time, from ‘les grands histoires’ to almanacs and pamphlets on prodigies and ‘divine signs’.[31] ‘Apocalyptical preaching’, it has been said, ‘was an extraordinarily widespread homiletic genre in Italy’ in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, with ordinary friars and monks to the fore.[32] In Bologna in 1576 and in Rome in 1585, the renowned Italian preacher Francesco Panigarola, bishop of Chrysopolis and Asti, gave sermons on the decay and dissolution of the world and the signs of the Last Judgement that were just as highly charged as anything offered by the Lutherans. Like the household of a dying man, he said, the world was reduced to chaos by its own senility and demonic disorder.[33] Valentin Leucht, the priest of the collegiate church of St Severin in Erfurt, fervently warned parishioners of the imminent end, the severity of the coming judgement, and the need for all Catholic Germans to repent—as well as admitting that the sheer extent of preaching on the Last Judgement had actually blunted its own impact.[34] In a work dedicated to the Archbishop of Rouen and given the highest ecclesiastical approval, the Sieur Paul de

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“ Bellarmine, *Tractatus de potestate summi pontiftcis,* 576-9; Franciscus Ribera, *Insacram beati Ioannis apostoli, et evangelistae Apocalypsin commentarii* (Lyons, 1592), 402—4; Braz Viegas, *Commentarii exegetici in Apocalypsim Ioannis apostoli* (Evora, 1601), 740-2.

” As suggested by Dclumcau, *La Peur,* 230—1.

” Male, *L'Art religieux,* 443; Dclumeau, *La Peur,* 130-1, 198-9, 207-8; Etienne Dclaruclle, ‘L’Antechrist chcz S. Vincent Ferrier, S. Bemardin de Sienne, et autour de Jeanne d’Arc’, in id., *La Piete populaire au moyen age* (Turin, 1975), 329-54; Andre Chaste), ‘L’Antechrist a la Renaissance’, in Enrico *Castc\\i(cd.), L'Umanesimo e ildemoniaco nell'arte (Rome,* 1952), 177-86; id., ‘L’Apocalypse en 1500: La Fresque de 1’Antechrist a la chapellc Saint-Brice d’Orvicto’, *Bibhotheque d’Humanisme et Renaissance,* 14 (1952), 124-40. For the text of Ferrer’s ’Report on the Antichrist’, submitted to the Avignon Pope Benedict XIII in 1412, sec Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1979), 256-7.

[11] Crouzet, *Guerriers de Dieu,* i. 45-7.

[12] Niccoli, *Prophecy and People,* 89-120, with many examples.

[11] Francesco Panigarola, Ler *Sermons de R.P..M. Francois Panigarole,* trans, anon. (Paris, 1599), esp. fos. 54’-65’.

[M] Valentin Leucht, *Ein Christliche Catholische, in Gottes Il'ort wolgegriindte Predigt, von dem emsten baldkommendenjiingstengericht* (Mainz, 1583), esp. sig. Aii'.

Pcrriercs-Varin attributed the various tribulations of early seventeenth-century France to the impending arrival of the Antichrist; he said this would happen in 1626 and the end of the world in 1666.[35] And some time between 1578 and 1606, in Alcalá de Henarcs, the Spanish Franciscan Fray Diego de Arce was interpreting Revelation literally in a Counter-Reformation context, to mean that 'the coming of the Antichrist and the destruction of the known social order of the universe' was imminent. His evidence was the coming of Christian disunity through the Lutheran heresy.[36] Another typical example is Sebastian Vcrron, who readily admitted that the timing of the end was unknown to men, as it was even to the very angels, yet went on to say (with equal orthodoxy) that it must follow shortly upon the signs given by Christ in Matthew 24—there being no age in which these could be so fully seen as the present. One of the clearest was the universal preaching of the gospel (Matthew 24: 14), which, according to Vcrron, 'this sixteenth century has for the most part accomplished'.[37] As has been remarked, it was always somewhat paradoxical for Catholic sceptics to postpone the last days when so many of their missionary colleagues, especially Franciscans and Jesuits, were doing their best to fulfil this particular condition for their arrival.[38]

Above all, the charge of antichristianism could be turned against the heretics. It was, after all, an eminently reversible concept, and (as John Jewel admitted) it could rest just as securely as the Protestant version on St Paul's caution that before the parousia there must be 'a falling away first'.[39] Catholics like the Ingolstadt professor and pro-chancellor (later canon of Liittich), Peter Stevart, constructed their exegesis of 2 Thessalonians in these terms.[40] The weight of medieval theology, and the authority of Aquinas in particular, also lay behind this expectation (and behind its implications for demonology and witchcraft beliefs[41]), and the contemporaneity of the Reformation made that, if anything, a better candidate for apostasy than the Reformers' equivalent target, the Papacy. In any case, the accompanying eschatology was reinforced rather than diluted. In a three-day mystery play acted at Modane in Savoy in 1580 and 1606 the Antichrist was, simply, Protestantism.[42] Many individual Catholics argued that Lutherans and/or Calvinists were the precursors of the

[35] Pcrriercs-Varin, *Advertissement a tous chrestiens;* cf. id., *Le Sommaire des secrets de l'Apocalypse, suyvant Fordre des chapitres* (Paris, 1610).

[36] Barnes-Karol, Religious Oratory in a Culture of Control', 64. For political millenarianism in early modem Portugal, see Raymond Cantcl, *Prophetisme et messianisme dans Facuvre d'Antonio Vieira* (Paris, 1960), 22-3.

[37] Sebastian Vcrron, *Chronica ecclesiae et monarchiarum a condito mundo* (Freiburg, 1599), 478,486.

[38] Firth, zfpora/yp/fr *Tradition,* 161 (and for other examples of Catholic eschatology, 111-13); Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy,* 275-6; J. L. Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom ofthe Franciscans in the New World,* 2nd rev. edn. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1970).

[39] Greenblatt, *Self Fashioning,* 82; Jewel, *An exposition,* 897.

[40] Peter Stevart, *Commentary in utramque D. Pauli apostoli ad Thessalonicenses, epistolam* (Ingolstadt, 1609), 219-85.

[41] C. E. Hopkin, *The Share of Thomas Aquinas in the Growth of the Witchcraft Delusion* (Philadelphia, 1940), 58-9.

[41] *Mysteredel'AntMristetdu7ugementdeDieu,inLouisGTOs(cd.),itudesurleMvsteredel'Antechrist et dujugement de Dieu* (Chambery, 1962), esp. 10-12.

Antichrist, among them Cornelius Gemma and the anonymous author of *Van der verceerlickcn aenstaende tyt Endechristcs* (1524) in the Low Countries,[41] * [43] Fridcricus Staph}' lus, Theodor (Dietrich) Graminaeus, and Johann Nase in Germany,[44] Artus Desire, Richard Roussat, Gabriel Du Preau, Claude Caron, 'Didierc Gillet', and Jean Boucher (as well as Pcrrieres-Varin) in France,[45] the English controversialist Nicholas Sanders in exile,[46] and the Italian philosopher Campanella in prison.[47] Most significant of all, was the adoption of the idea by the author of the greatest synthesis of Catholic ideas concerning the Antichrist, Thomas Malvenda.[48] Such writers often adopted the same militant language, notably the violent imagery of Revelation, as their opponents, a process seen especially vividly in the polemical works of Florimond de Racmond, himself a convert from Calvinism.[49]

Since for Catholics the reign of the Antichrist was still thought of in literal terms as of brief duration (usually three and a half years), even the official 'futurist' argument that it had not yet come need not necessarily have dampened apocalyptical enthusiasms. But in the deeds of Protestants there were, in any case, signs that it was about to commence. The bitter denominational polemic about its exact timing and whereabouts should not, therefore, be allowed to obscure the fact that the general shape of apocalyptic history, the deduction that men were living in its final period, and the consequent need to unmask the sins and evils which threatened on every side, were taken for granted by Protestant and Catholic alike. Even the reserve of Bellarmine did not prevent him from noting that the heretics of his time were the Antichrist's forerunners, since they, like the Antichrist, wished to abolish the mass.

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[41] Cornelius Gemma, *De naturaedivinis characterismis; seu raris el admirandis spectaculis, causis, indiciis, proprietatibus rerum in partibus singulis universi* (Antwerp, 1575), bk. 2, 181-2 (and see below, Ch. 24); Willem Frijhoff, 'Witchcraft and its Changing Representation in Eastern Gclderland, from the Sixteenth to Twentieth Centuries*, in Gijswijt-Hofstra and Frijhoff (eds.), *Witchcraft in the Netherlands,* 168-9 (in this Dutch tract, it was also said that witches were the 'henchmen* of the Antichrist).

[44] Fridcricus Staphylus, *Vom letsten undgrossen Abfall, so vorder Ziikunfft des Antichrisligescliehen soil* (Ingolstadt, 1565), fos. 103—74; Graminaeus, *In Esaiamet prophetiam sex dierum Geneseos oratio,* 17-18; for Johann Nase, see Janssen, *History of the German People,* xi. 361. Cf. Leucht, *Christliche ... Predigt,* sig. Eiv", and for further examples, Dietrich Korn, *Das thema des jiingsten Pages in der deutschen literaturdes 17. Jahrhunderts* (Tubingen, 1957), 12-13.

[41] Artus Desire,' *Le Atiroir des francs Taulpins, autrement dits Antichristiens* (Paris, 1546), sigs. Aiiii', Bvii', and *passim;* Richard Roussat, *Livre d'estat et mutation des temps* (Lyons, 1550), 163-72; Gabriel Du Preau, *Des faux prophetes, seducteurs, et hypochrites, quiviennent d nous en habit de brebis: maisau dedans sont loups ravissans*(Paris, 1564), fos. 1 I^{r},47^{r}-',98^{r}, 150', 164'; Claude Caron, *L*Ante christ demasque (Pouman,* 1589), 13, 17, 19, 40-1, 97, 107, 181-3, 354; Gillet [pseud.?], *La Subtile et naifve recherche de Pheresie,* 10-11, 64-77 (it seems likely that this was not written, as claimed, by a 'simple femme de village but issued by the Jesuits, perhaps to make the point that even someone as naive as a peasant woman could unmask the antichristian errors of the heretics); Boucher, *Couronne mystique,* 368-72; Pcrrieres-Vann, *Advertissement,* 37.

[44] Sanders, *De visibili monarchia ecclesiae,* 773—4; refuted by Fulkc, *A dtscoverie,* 373-93.

[47] Campanella, *De Antichristo,* 8 and *passim.* [41] Malvenda, *De Antichristo,* 501— 2.

[49] Florimond de Racmond, *L 'Histoire de !a naissance, progrez et decadence de Pheresie de cesiecle* (Paris, 1605),/wrim; cf. id., *L'Antichrist,* 35-6,61-3. On this aspect of Racmond, see Dubois, *La Conception de Phistoire,* 46-54, and for the Catholic counter-offensive in France, ibid. 41—1, 516—33. For further references to Luther as the Antichrist, and for Catholic polemic on the Antichrist, see Preuss, K*orstellung vom Antichrist,* 210-17,247-61.

Citing the first epistle of John 2:18 (‘as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time), he concluded: ‘We know of Antichrist’s coming at the end of the world, but now we see that many of his precursors, or lesser Antichrists, are already present. It is thus a certain sign that this is the last hour or age.’[50]

If, finally, we add the evidence adduced by Marjorie Reeves for the survival into the seventeenth century of widespread interest in the prophecies of the twelfth-century Calabrian monk Joachim of Fiore, we arrive at a yet firmer impression of the importance of eschatology in early modern thought. Joachimism differed from the ideas we have been mainly discussing in building positively on hopes for a future climactic age of bliss, a rewra/M *mundi,* within history. Drawing conceptually on the symbolism of the millennium, the seventh or ‘Sabbath Age’, and, above all, the third dispensation or *status* of the final member of the Trinity, it focused on spiritual and social benefits yet to come. Despite this ‘optimistic’ aspect, however, it was still vitally concerned with the problem of present and ever-accelerating evils and also with the identity of the Antichrist. Notable, too, is the way it was influential, sometimes in an open, sometimes in a half-submerged fashion, in both Protestant and Catholic polemic, as well as in contexts such as those surrounding humanist learning and technological innovation, where novelty was a less contentious issue.[51]

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It is surely safe, then, to conclude that eschatology was a central element in religious thought on both sides of the Reformation, not peripheral to it or restricted to Protestant lands. According to one English divine, preaching in 1594, both Protestants and Catholics ‘expect the accomplishment of this last houre’.[52] Another conclusion to be drawn from recent work on the subject is that eschatology was essentially an orthodox and reinforcing element, rather than a vehicle for radical dissent. Those radical aspects of medieval eschatology that survived were untypical of the main tradition, in which apocalyptic versions of history were designed to maintain order and uniformity rather than overthrow them.[55] Naturally, Protestant eschatology expressed dissent, but not, for the most part, on behalf of anything we could call socially or intellectually subversive. For its Catholic counterpart, the question scarcely arises at all. In each context, the dominant mood was normative and admonitory; the justice of God was called down, finally, on the breakers of codes. In Lamont’s still suggestive formulation, then, these beliefs complemented rather than challenged the general assumptions of the age. To share them was not an indication of personal or social

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[w] Bcllarminc, *Tractatus de potestate summipontificis,* 588, see also 585; cf. Firth, *Apocalyptic Tradition,* 163.

” Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy, passim-,* cf. cad., ‘History and Eschatology: Medieval and Early Protestant Thought in some English and Scottish Writings’, in P. M. Clogan (ed.), *Aledievalia et Humanistica,* NS 4 (1973), 99-123; cad., ‘History and Prophecy in Medieval Thought’, in P. M. Clogan (cd.), *MedievaliaetHumanistica,NS 5* (1974), *51-75.*

[12] Dove, *A sermon ... intrealing ofthe second comming of Christ,* sigs. A7'-A8'.

“ This is strongly emphasized by both McGinn, *Visions of the End,* 29-36, and Emmerson *Antichrist,* 3-10.

alienation and maladjustment but of deep involvement in a collective mentality.[54] Far from being a sign of disorientation, speculations about the meaning of Revelation, the nature and location of the Antichrist, and the duties of Christians in the last days were a vital means by which men oriented themselves in relation to affairs and issues of the age—embracing, above all, the Protestant and Catholic Reformations but also ostensibly unrelated matters like the opening of new lands by overseas discovery[55] and of new arts and sciences by the 'advancement of learning'. Of the latter, it has been said that 'throughout the Scientific Revolution, Christian eschatology provided an undiminishing incentive towards science, if not a primary motivating factor.'[56] The need to account for eschatology in terms of supposed abnormalities in early modern thought and action has accordingly disappeared.

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[54] Lamont, *Godly Rule,* 14-15. It is noticeable that Lamont took the principle itself from an early version of H. R. Trevor-Roper's essay 'The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', despite the latter's often dismissive reduction of witchcraft beliefs to mental and social pathologies.

[55] See above n. 38 and Dclumcau, *La Peur,* 205-6,443 n. 31; Djelal Kadir, *Columbus and the Ends of the Earth: Europe's Prophetic Rhetoric as Conquering Ideology* (Oxford, 1992), 1-61.

[56] Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton,* 48, and see 15-47. There is now a large literature on the subject; see esp. id., *Great Instauration,* pp. xvi, 1-99,101,114,335,484—520; Kocher, *Science and Religion,* 76-81,88; NL C. Jacob, 'Millenarianism and Science in the Late Seventeenth Century', *J. Hist. Ideas,* 37 (1976), 335-41;Frank E. Manuel, *Isaac Newton Historian* (Cambridge, 1963), panim, esp. 145-6,154-5; Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic,* 72,203-4,236. On the continued validity of eschatological prophecy after the Restoration in England, see McKeon, *Politics and Poetry,* 149-281.

23

The Life and Times of the Antichrist

> Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.
>
> (1 John 2:18)

> An interesting parallel to the rise and fall of belief in a world torn between God and the angels on the one hand and the Devil and the witches on the other was the rise and fall in the belief in Antichrist.
>
> (Lawrence Stone, *The Past and the Present Revisited)*

When they applied apocalyptic prophecy to the understanding of witchcraft, writers on demonology were, then, only adopting in their own specialism a highly respectable form of enquiry with a considerable bearing on other major contemporary concerns. Free of the need to explain away this aspect of their thought we can turn instead to the particular themes that linked eschatology and demonology together in a single schema of ideas and made witchcraft a ready idiom for denominational polemic. First of all, there is the figure of the Antichrist, both as a bringer of demonic inversions and as a wielder of magical powers identical to those by which demons and witches were also supposed to act. Then there is the cultural idiom in which witchcraft could be seen as merely one item in an extensive repertoire of literally portentous happenings—wayward events that were widely held to signify the coming of disaster, dissolution, and judgement. The same quality of prodigiousness which (as we saw in Part II) brought witchcraft and demonism within the ambit of natural philosophy, here turned them into data for historians, albeit historians of the future. Thirdly, eschatological fervour led (in the pages of texts at least) to calls for the 'cleansing' of witches from societies, suggesting that Lawrence Stone's parallelism of beliefs may also have led to a convergence of actions. Important strands of early modem thought, concerned especially with the nature and meaning of disorder, arc evident in each of these three areas. But the main reason for considering them is to argue further that ideas about history and ideas about witches came together in a natural and mutually reinforcing partnership.

♦ » *

It was no witch hunter but John Foxc who wrote, 'the elder the world waxeth, the longer it continueth, the nearer it hastencth to its end, the more Satan rageth.'[1] Thomas Cranmer was teaching the seventh petition of the Lord's Prayer, not writing about witches, when he noted that 'the devyll in this lattre tymc doeth dayly more and more rage against the true churche and people of God, forasmuche as he perceyvethc, that hys kyngdome drawcth to an ende, and a shorte tyme remayneth untyll the day of judgcmcnte come, and his everlastynge damnation.’[2] * Luther, for whom eschatology was just as vital a matter, was referring to peasant revolt, not witchcraft, when he said: ‘I suspect that the devil feels the Last Day coming and therefore undertakes such an unheard-of-act, as though saying to himself, “This is the last, therefore it shall be the worst; I will stir up the dregs and knock out the bottom.” ” If Revelation, 12: 12 was important to witchcraft writers, it was absolutely critical to the eschatological argument that it was precisely the worst calamities that were the most supportable and, indeed, the most reassuring. The demonism traceable in magic and witchcraft was only one, if rather pure, example of an all-embracing phenomenon universally associated with the last and worst times. The idea of *postremus furor Satanae* was accordingly very widely dispersed in the literature devoted to them. As Heinrich Bullinger’s gloss on this text succinctly put it: ‘By the way is noted also the wicked nature of sathan, which knowing that the last judgement is at hande, wherin he must be throwen headlong into hell, thinketh to requite and recompence the shortnes of time with the crueltie of his wrath and develish furie.’[4]

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[1] JohnFoxc,7'A^z/r/z an</Afonumenffo/7oAnFoxe,ed. Rev. S.R.Cattlcy (8 vols.; London, 1841-89), viii. 754; cf. Dove, *Sermon ... intreating ofthe second comming of Christ,* sig. A5.

The images of binding and loosing in biblical eschatology were especially pervasive and suggestive. To think about history in such categories was, of course, already a form of demonology; and to argue that the devil had been set free to terrorize the world could in itself give substantial support to the belief that witchcraft was a real and developing menace. In this respect the distinction already alluded to between ‘amillennial’ and ‘millennial’ (or ‘pessimistic’ and ‘optimistic’) modes of thought ceases to have much significance.[5] For whatever the precise vision of the future on offer, eschatology taught men and women to recognize in the events of their own times a similar kind of logic. Whether as a prelude to Doomsday or to a New Jerusalem within history, they were the climax of the universal dualisms of good and evil, true and false, Christ and Antichrist, and, for that very reason, held the promise of imminent deliverance by divine agency. Despite technical differences between the Satan cast temporarily into the bottomless pit and the Satan cast finally into the lake of fire and brimstone, the present was, above all, the occasion for consummate demonism. The uncomplicated apocalypse expected by a Lutheran like the German preacher Heinrich Riess led him to the view that the kingdom of the devil had arrived: ‘And things have never before been so terrible as they are now, when the devil has so gained the upperhand that he has got men almost entirely into his power, and works through them whatsoever he pleases.’ Yet those who expected a millenarian future, or one couched in Joachimist language, often spoke of the present in much the same terms.[6]

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[2] Thomas Cranmer, *Cathechismus* (London, 1548), fo. ccii.

[2] Manin Luther, ‘Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants’ (1525), in E. G. Rupp and Benjamin Drewery(cds.),Afflr/inLMMrr(London, 1970), 123.

[4] Bullinger, *Hundred sermons,* 363; cf. Ambrosius Taurer, *Der geistliche, uberjliissiggnugsam ausschlahende Feigenbau>m* (n.p., 1594), sigs. Di', Hviii'-’.Jii'-Jiii'; Thomas Thompson, *Antichrist arraigned* (London, 1618), 34-5; Simon iMusacus, *Melancholischer Teufel, Nuetzlicher bericht und heilsamer Rath, Cegruendet aus Cottes K'ort, trie man alle Melancholische, Teuflischegedancken, vonsichtreibensol, Insonderheit alien Schwermuetigen hertzen zum sonderlichen Trostgestellet* (Thamm in Neumark, 1572), sig. Aii’.

’ This distinction was one of the points at issue in the criticisms of Lamont’s *Godly Rule* offered by Bernard Capp, '*Godly Rule* and English Millcnarianism’, *Past and Present,* 52 (1971), 106-17; see also William Lamont, ‘Richard Baxter, the Apocalypse and the mad Major’, *Past and Present, 55* (1972), 68-74, and Bernard Capp, ‘The Millennium and Eschatology in England’, *Past and Present,* 57 (1972), 156-62.1 have preferred the views of Delumeau, *La Peur,* 197-231, who emphasizes the themes common to both varieties of eschatological expectation.

There were, moreover, even in Revelation, passages that linked it specifically with the flourishing of devil-worship and sorcery. These were not always taken literally and they were only rarely the occasion for demonological excursions by the specialist exegetes. Nevertheless, they helped in the fusion of historical myths with witchcraft beliefs. Babylon, the quintessential image of the evil society, became hardly less notorious for magic and sorcery than for blasphemy and fornication.[7] Like most Protestants Bullinger chose to regard Babylonish witchcraft as symbolic of false religion. But he also described the sorcerers extirpated from the New Jerusalem (in Revelation 21: 8) as ‘magiciens, inchauntcrs, sothsayers, witches, and by devilfish craftes love makers *(magos, incantatores, sagas, ac artibtis diabolicis atnores conciliantes)'*\ and he made the connection which must have occurred to many of his readers when he said that Revelation 9: 21 referred (in part) to ‘Witchcrafte, or poisoning *(yeneficium)',* and then commented: ‘Poysoning, Iovccuppes, and inchauntmentes, were in the time of S. John most frequented, through out the Romane Empire: at this daie those wicked artes are renewed.”

Descriptions of the other evils of the last times reflected the same assumptions about disorder that informed writings on witchcraft; a single grid of concepts was at work in the two areas. Above all, eschatology was a further major contributor to the rhetoric of inversion. Behind the specific examples of it blamed on witches, therefore, lay historically based expectations of a general overturning. ‘The whole world in the mean time’, said Luther of the last times, ‘without any fear is mad on surfetting and drunkenness, and lust, and all manner of wickedness, and turns and confounds all things upside-down.” In the pre-millennial England of Nathaniel Homes, those who professed the principles of true religion were ‘turned topsy turve ... from what they were’ and become sectarian extremists.[10] For Jean de Marconville the French civil wars spoke of the end of the world in inversionary signs: the rich had become

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‘ Heinrich Riess, *Einpredig über den nahe vorderthürstehendenjüngsten tag* (1605), cited Janssen, *History of the German People,* xii, 313 (I have been unable to locate a copy of the original).

’ An example from a standard history of magic is Ludwig Milichius, *Der Zauber TeufTel* (1563), in Stambaugh (cd.), *Tcufelbucher in Auswahl*^ i. 30—1.

* Heinrich Bullinger, *Hundred sermons,* 577,644, 280; for the original Latin, see id., *In Apocalypsim Jesu Christi... condones centum* (Basel, 1557), 249, 288, 125. Cf. George Gifford, *Sermons upon the whole booheofthe Revelation (London,\S96), 363-4.*

’ [Martin Luther], *The signs of Christs coming, and ofthe last day* (London, 1661), 33 (first pub. Wittenberg, 1531 as *Ein tröstlichepredigt von derzukunjjl Christi, undden vorgehenden zeichen desjungsten tags,* and in English 1570).

[10] Homes, *Dacmonologie and theologie,* 12.

poor, the joyous, melancholic, the free, servile, the magnanimous, cowardly *(conard),* the peaceful, anxious, and the bold, despairing.[11]

Here, the 'little apocalypse' of Matthew 24, with its more concrete references to the events that would signify the end of the world, had a greater influence than Revelation itself—along with the ever potent imagery of the upside-down household in Mark 13. The coming of false Christs and the warning that lies would be received for truth, and profane things for pure, were so fundamental to religious thought in general that the inversion implied in them can be adopted as the organizing principle of all the other disorders expected in the last times, whether involving the supplanting of social and moral values by their opposites, the disasters of famine, pestilence, persecution, and warfare, or violent upheavals in the environment. There were many comments on the prevalence of social misrule—the rebelliousness of the young and the lower orders, and the breakdown of discipline in families, schools, and workplaces[12]—and many on inversionary wonders in nature, like the 'Winterley Summers, and Summer-like Winters' spoken of by the Englishman Thomas Draxe.[13]

All manner of elaborations might be made to this basic iconography of apocalyptic events, like those influenced by the antichristian inversions described by the early patristic authority Hippoly tus and by Lactantius in a section of book VII of his *Divine Institutes:* 'neither law, nor order, nor military discipline shall be preserved; no one shall reverence hoary locks, nor recognise the duty of piety, nor pity sex or infancy; all things shall be confounded and mixed together against right, and against the laws of nature.'[14] Here too it was the signs of an upside-down world that caught the attention of writers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Lambert Daneau's gloss was that 'all things shall be confounded and turned up-side downe agaynst law and nature', Bullinger's, quoting a thirteenth-century commentator on Lactantius, that the whole world would be in (what his translator called) a 'whurlyburly *(Otnnis terra tumultuatur).''*[5] It was Jean de Marconville's opinion that even if Lactantius had lived through the miseries of the sixteenth century he could not have given a better description of them than the one he offered in the third.[16]

* * *

The inevitable focus for these representations was the figure of the Antichrist, that supreme inversionary symbol. At a much earlier stage in this study it was necessary to consider how this very concept betrayed mental traits associated with the bifurcation of experience. In that context what was important was simply (as Daneau wrote), 'the great Antithesis, or contrarietie that is betweene the doctrine of Christ and of Antichrist'.[17] Translated into historical terms this same principle led, in the medieval tradition, to the elaboration of a *vita* in which the Antichrist's career parodied the life of Christ (and the lives of the saints[18]) and culminated in a whole epoch of inversions. The details, though very varied, rely almost entirely on this uniform pattern. The Antichrist would, for instance, be born in Babylon of a diabolical union. His development would be marked for consummate wickedness. And the fruition of his power would lead to a church based on deceit and persecution, a form of political authority based on tyranny and the overturning of laws, and a society in which virtues and vices became reversible. The historian of this tradition, R. K. Emmerson, speaks of its complete 'apocalyptic dualism', a feature which led in turn to conceptions of antichristian ages of total inversion. Even the concrete symbolism conforms. The Catholic writer John Christopherson reported that it was an 'olde mens saying ... that when Antichrist shulde come, the rootes of the trees shulde growe upwarde.'[19]

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[11] Marconvillc, *Recueil memorable,* fo. 1', see also 2'.

[12] e.g. Meder, *Zehen Christliche Busspredigten,* sigs. Gii'-Giii'; Tobias Seiler, *Daemonomania* (Wittenberg, 1605), sigs. Aiv^{r}, Gviii"; Anthony Marten, *A second sound, or warning ofthe trumpet unto judgement* (London, 1589), sig. Gin"*; Daniel Schaller, *Herolt. Aussgesandt in alien Landen ojfendtlich zuverkundigen unnd auszuruffen. Das diese Weldt mil irem wesen bald vergehen werde, unnd derjiingste Gerichstaggarnahe furder* TAurrty (Magdeburg, 1611), sigs. Giv'-Hii',Jii'.

” Thomas Draxe, *An alarum to the last judgement* (London, 1615), 90-1.

[14] Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes,* bk. vii, ch. 17, in *The Works of Lactantius,* trans. W. Fletcher, Ante-Nicene Christian Library (25 vols.; London, 1867-97), xxi, 468; cf. Hippolytus, *Demonstrate de Christo et Antichristo,* in *Writings of Hippolytus,* trans. A. Roberts and W. H. Rambaut (25 vols.; London, 1867-97), ix. 3-40.

[15] Daneau, *Treatise touching Antichrist,* 18; Bullinger, *Of the end of the world,* sigs. Eiv'-Fn' (quotation at Fi"), Latin original in id., *De fine seculi et iudicio venturo Domini nostrifesu Christi* (Basel, 1557), 43.

“ Marconvillc, *Recueil memorable,* fo. 14'.

John Jewel denounced this ingredient of the inherited legend as a 'fond tale', and Protestants in general came to see the entire *vita* as a trivial distraction from the serious business of identifying antichristian elements in the Papacy. Yet their own polemic reveals the same habits of thought and the same symbolism. Jewel himself suggested that the Antichrist would

> change light into darkness, and darkness into light... If a man see well, he shall make him blind ... Such as are whole he shall make sick: he shall infect them with leprosy which before were clean... He shall change the sense and feeling of nature: he shall make the son hate the father, and shall make the father hate the son, yea, to seek the death of his son.[20]

For Jewel these were the real 'miracles' of the Antichrist, indicating as they did the true nature and purpose both of the individual miracles alleged by Catholic historians and the religious observances derived from them. Thematically, however, such allusions echo the Catholic tradition itself. For example, the disruption of patterns of affection and authority in the family, and by extension in society as a whole, was very commonly regarded as an accompaniment to antichristianism.[21] In the elaborate Antichrist play staged at Modane there were depictions of social overturning and

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[17] Daneau, *Treatise touching Antichrist,* 91.

[18] R. K. Emmerson, 'Antichrist as Anti-Saint: The Significance of Abbot Adso's *Libellus de Antichristo', American Benedictine Rev.* 30(1979), 175-90.

[19] Christopherson, *Exhortation to allmenne to take hede of rebellion,* sigs. Tvi'-Tvii'; cf. *Becon, Actes of Christe and of Antichrist,* 526. Details of the traditional *vita* in Emmerson, *Antichrist,* 74-107, and of the disorder and inversions associated with the Antichrist in Wilhelm Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend,* trans. A. H. Keane (London, 1896), 121-2, 175-82.

[20] Jewel, *Exposition,* 923, see also 903.

[21] See, for example, Roussat, *Livre d'estat,* 171; Jean Le Normant, *De l'exorcisme, au roy tres-Chrestien Louis le juste* (n. p., 1619), 36-9; Desire, *Miroir des francs Taulpins,* sigs. Evii'-Eviii'.

class warfare, as well as of rivers and seas flowing backwards.[22] We should not, therefore, allow the evidently conflicting targets at which the idea of the Antichrist was actually aimed to obscure the conceptual uniformities in the manner of its polemical deployment. To conceive of religious enmity in this way was itself to envisage the total inversion of the world which experienced it—whether at the hands of individual or institution, whether conceived of as a physical and social reality or as a moral and spiritual transformation only.

The world upside-down was, accordingly, as much an aspect of eschatological expectations as of literary imagination, popular myths—or, indeed, witchcraft beliefs. A particularly gloomy but influential example is the set of dialogues which the Swiss Calvinist Pierre Viret published first as *Dialogue du desordre qui est a present au monde* and then in expanded form with the title *Le monde a I'empire et le monde demoniacle.* The themes of the first four dialogues are given at once in a play on the word *empire*—referring both to the states and monarchies which are the focus of world history and to the way the world itself ‘grows every day worse and worse, especially in these last days, when it has arrived at its final old age’.[23] The mortality of regimes becomes a mirror for the wasting *(empirance)* and depravity that inevitably afflict all forms of social and moral order. The impending end of things and God’s ultimate judgement are regarded as the only true remedy. Meanwhile, the reign of the Antichrist has arrived, and with it (Viret reminds his readers in a margin note) *le monde renverse.* One of the speakers in the dialogue remarks at this point: ‘I do not think that the world has ever been so corrupted as it is at present: for everything in it is back-to-front.’[24]

The leading French Antichrist expert, Florimond de Raemond, matched Viret’s diagnosis with a Catholic version of equal force and influence. The tribulations and disasters of the past were mere games compared to those expected under the Antichrist. Among the signs of his coming, Raemond (citing St Ephraim and St Jerome) listed the conventional prodigies in the heavens, raging seas, sterility in the earth, and the withering away of vegetation. The inhabitants of the Eastern world would flock in fear to the West and those of the West to the East. Just as the political rebellions of *les grands* lead, by contagion, to discord at all levels of human society; just as unnatural alterations in the properties of heavenly bodies destabilize the terrestrial affairs which they govern; so the world under the Antichrist ‘will be reduced to another chaos: all things will be turned upside-down’. Although the Antichrist had been expected at disorderly moments in the past, the contemporary miseries of Germany and France brought by Protestantism fitted these descriptions best of all. For Raemond, the sixteenth century outclassed every other age in heresy, atheism, and all other forms of irreligion, together with unnatural vices, massacres and murders, betrayals, treasons, and rebellions. It was, he said, the sewer of history, a proposition illustrated by recent cases of cannibalism, atrocity, and debauchery. The France of the religious wars, he lamented, was a land where women played at skittles with the heads of their defeated enemies, where severed limbs were carried about as trophies, and where sexual criminals resorted openly to necrophilia.[25]

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[22] *Mystere de PAntechrist,* 13-14,36,68.

[n] Viret, *Le Monde d Pempire,* 323. Commentary in Dubois, *Conception de Phistoire,* 443-65; Crouzet, *Guerriers de Dieu,* i. 648-57.

[24] Viret, *Le Monde d I'empire, 5* and 1-51 *passim.*

Discussions like those of Viret and Racmond suggest how easy it must have been to fit an inversionary activity like witchcraft into that portion of history—the present—of which inversion was the guiding principle. There was a vital symmetry, so to speak, between the logic of the action and the logic of the times. Witches profaned the sacraments, broke crucifixes, and produced inversions in nature, but in the Modanc play it was the Antichrist who did all these things. It is thus of some importance that Viret should go on in his later dialogues, six in all, to analyse the subject of demonism. For the most part, his purpose is to extract a kind of metaphorical significance from the phenomena of possession and exorcism—to suggest that, since the world, in its final period, is 'possessed' by demonic morality and, above all, demonic religion, much can be learned about it from examples of actual demoniacs. This is something to which we must return in subsequent pages. But it is clear that for Viret possession is not simply a metaphor for 'perilous times' and spiritual failings.[25] [26]

Racmond likewise moves immediately from his depictions of upside-down France to a chapter on the vogue for witchcraft in the 1590s. 'All those', he remarks 'who have left any indications of the times when the Antichrist should appear, write that witchcraft will then be spread everywhere. Has it ever been more popular than in this present unhappy age?' The provincial *parlement* of Bordeaux, in which Racmond was a *conseiller du roy,* could not cope with the number of cases, and its prisons were overflowing with suspects. As fast as he and his colleagues consigned the witches to the flames, the devil replaced them with fresh recruits. As a typical example he singled out the case of Jeanne Bosdeau from the *châtellenie* of Sallagnac in Limousin in 1594. She had confessed to attending sabbats at Puy-de-Dôme where the devil made the sign of the cross with his left hand, the witches danced back-to-back, and the mass was celebrated *à rebours.* The celebrants turned their backs to the altar and the 'priest' wore a black cope without a cross. There was a slice of blackened turnip for the Host and water instead of wine in the chalice; 'in order to produce holy water, the goat pissed in a hole in the ground and he who conducted the office sprinkled the assistants with it through a black aspergillum.' Raemond was naturally horrified by these revelations; they were, he said, worse than anything found in Bodin's *Démonomanie.* But we should recall that he was primarily an eschatologist, not a witchcraft theorist. What made him associate the case of Jeanne Bosdeau with the coming of the Antichrist was not merely witchcraft as such but the evidence of sustained inversion—*grande singerie*—to match that offered by his apocalyptic reading of history.

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[25] Raemond, *L'Antichrist,* 726-30,758,88-102.

[26] For the second set of Viret's dialogues, see the Eng. trans, (itself in 2 pts.) by Thomas Stocker, *The worlde possessed with devils, conteinyng three dialogues ... The second part of the demoniacke worlde, or, worlde possessed with divels, conteining three dialogues* (London, 1583); full discussion in Ch. 27 below

The practices of witches were truly abominable but to a man of Raemond's interests and beliefs they were certainly not unintelligible and they were not entirely unexpected.[27]

* * *

But it was one thing to argue that magic and witchcraft were somehow appropriate in an age of antichristian disorder, and another to say that the Antichrist was actually a magician. This too was an idea, inherited from the past, which merited considerable attention in conventional sixteenth- and seventeenth-century thought. To an extent it was already intimated in one of the most typical ingredients of the traditional *vita*—the suggestion that he was the offspring of the devil, and, therefore (as St Chrysostom had said), 'possessed all his energy'. Some of the patristic authorities and many of the popular medieval accounts had explained this in terms of a form of miscegenation between a human mother and an incubus. Alternatively, it had been proposed that his parents were both human but that conception, gestation, and birth were demonically inspired. According to Adso of Montier-en-Der:

> Just as the Holy Spirit came into the Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ, overshadowed her with his power, and filled her with divinity, so that she conceived of the Holy Spirit and what was born of her would be divine and holy, so too the devil will descend into the mother of the Antichrist and completely fill her, surround her completely, possess her completely both inside and out, so that she will conceive through a man with the cooperation of the devil, and what will be born will be totally inimical, evil, and lost.[28]

Both versions were adopted in the early modern period, although, apart from the useful inference that papal institutions had a demonic pedigree, literalness disqualified them in Protestant eyes. The usual Catholic interpretation and the one that became official was, however, something of a conflation. It was denied that devils had generative powers of their own but agreed that they might manipulate those belonging to humans. In consequence, historians and eschatologists came to explore an identical intellectual territory to that traversed by the witch-theorists when they debated whether sexual relations between devils and witches could result in progeny. Cardinal Bellarmine, for instance, condemned the view that the devil might create offspring 'without the seed of a man'. But it was not an error to say 'that the Antichrist will be born of the devil and a woman, in the same manner as those who are said to be born by incubus devils', evidence for whose activities could, after all, be found in St Augustine; 'For [the devil]... is well able, having assumed in body the form of a woman, to engage with a man in the carnal act and to receive seed, and then in the very same way to engage in the like act with a woman, cast the seed received from the man into the woman’s womb and so bring forth a man by this means.’[2]’ Any sense of a consequent diminution in the demonic attributes of the Antichrist was removed by the Catholic church’s greatest expert on the matter, the Dominican Thomas Malvenda. Agreeing that this was the likely manner of his conception, he argued that, according to the Spanish physician Francisco Valles (Vallesius), those born in this way were none the less of the strongest, fiercest, and most evil disposition. By an adroit piece of genetic engineering the devil could, by ‘exciting, applying, fomenting and compounding the humours *(ita commoturum, applicaturum, foturum ac temperaturum hutnores)* fashion a being of both exquisite appearance and superlative immorality.[30]

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[27] Racmônd, Lz/ñr/fAmr. 102-5.

[21] From the very popular work by Adso of Montier-en-Der, *De orlu el tempore Antichrists* (r.950), trans. McGinn, *Visions of the End.* 85. For the medieval debates on this subject, see ibid. 52; Bernard McGinn, 'Portraying Antichrist in the Middle Ages', in Werner Verbekc, Daniel Vcrhelst, and Andries Welkcnhuysen (eds.), *The Use and Abuse ofEschatology' in the Middle Ages* (Louvain, 1988), 1-48, esp. 2; Bousset, *Antichrist Legend.* 138-43; Emmerson, *Antichrist.* 79-83, 163, 185; Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Law,* 7.

One gets used to such arguments among the writers of demonology; they also tell us something about late Renaissance medical theory. But to find discussions of transferable semen and demonic infusions embedded deeply in the great texts of Counter-Reformation polemic, however disconcerting initially, is further evidence of the cross-currents of thought that linked witchcraft beliefs to the other intellectual interests of the age. As elsewhere, we recognize a common source in the pages of Augustine and Aquinas. Nor should it be forgotten that Catholic ideas on this subject were accessible at other cultural levels. The crude woodcuts of Wynkyn de Wordc’s publication *Here begynneth the byrthe and lyfe of the moostfalse and deceytfull /Intechryst (c.* 1528) include a depiction of devils watching over (and, by implication, influencing) the conception of the Antichrist. The Modane Antichrist play had an early scene in which, following a Jew’s seduction of his own daughter, the devil entered her womb to take possession of it. And during the public exorcisms at Sainte-Baumc near Aix-en-Provence in 1610 and 1611 one of the demoniacs, Louise Capeau (or, allegedly, the devil in possession of her), declared that the Antichrist was ‘already borne of a Jewish woman that was got with child by an Incubus’.[31] It is tempting to infer a thriving visual and oral dispersion of these aspects of the historical legend, to match its popularity with the writers of textbooks.

If the circumstances of the Antichrist’s birth implied the potential to wield full demonic powers, his upbringing and education turned this into a reality. A further commonplace of the medieval tradition was that he would be raised in the company of magicians and taught the full range of the magical arts. As Edward Peters has noted, this was an additional inverted parallel with Christ, at whose birth the Magi surrendered their arts.[32] A characteristic statement is found in one of the later adaptations of Adso entitled *De ortu, vita et moribus Antichrist!;* a text very widely cited in early modern Europe, and usually ascribed either to St Augustine or, as here, to the ninth-century cleric Rabanus Maurus: ‘Antichrist will have magicians, evildoers,

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” Bclhrminc, *Tractalus depotestate summipontijicis,* 592-4; cf. Viegas, *Commentarii exegetiei in Apocalypsim,* 724; Porri, *Vaso di Peritd,* sigs. Gi’-Gii'; Castaldi, *De potestate angelica,* ii. 120-6.

[30] Malvendo, *De Antichristo,* 75-6.

[31] *Here begynneth the byrthe and lyfe of the moost false and deceytfull Antechryst* (n.p., n.d. [1525?]), sig. Aii’; Aichcllc, *Antichristdrama,* 95; Michaelis, *Admirable historic,* 299.

” Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Law,* 7,19 n. 16.

soothsayers, and enchanters, who, sent with the devil’s inspiration, will instruct him in all iniquity and falsehood, and evil spirits will be his leaders, eternal friends and inseparable companions.’[33] During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this remark found its way into the commentaries of Catholics like Malvenda and the Portuguese scholar Braz Vicgas. In a chapter on the adolescence and training of the Antichrist Malvenda explained that he would become adept in ‘curious studies and forbidden arts, and all types of magic, having the most excellent teachers, all taken from the most complete magicians, necromancers, soothsayers, diviners, sorcerers and enchanters ’; for him, too, the ‘evil spirits’ of Rabanus Maurus were familiar demons *(paredri)."* Viegas commented that the Antichrist ‘will be most versed in all the magic arts, the knowledge of divination, and the science of incantation and witchcrafts (*veneficiorum*)’, and Raemond that ‘all the magicians, diviners, witches, and enchanters will unite with him.’[35] According to the Spanish authority Honofre Maneseal he would be ‘magician, and sorcerer, and enchanter’, while towards the end of the seventeenth century the Capuchin Dionysius of Luxemburg was still referring to him as ‘altogether the most excellent magician, necromancer, soothsayer, and blesscr’.[36]

This, however, was a topic of interest to Protestant writers too, for, as we shall see, it had enormous polemical value and could not therefore be dismissed as just another ‘fond tale’. A typical example is the remarks of the Swiss Zwinglian Rudolph Walther whose *Antichristus* was translated into German and English; the Antichrist would be ‘streinghtned continually with swarmes of magical philosophers, inchauntours, and sorcerours, which shall instructe him by and by in his furst tendre yeares, in the exercise of such abominable sciences, and shal make him handsom to devillishe services’.[37] The Calvinist Lambert Daneau simply cited the Rabanus Maurus passage, adding that the Catholic clergy were a perfect illustration of it.[38] In Tudor England, Thomas Bccon noted that the Antichrist had his portion with witches.[39]

These various matters helped foster the assumption that the end of time and the flourishing of magic and witchcraft were allied phenomena. But they pale before the

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[11] Hrabanus Magnentius [Rabanus Maurus], *De institutione clericorum ...De ortu, vita et moribus Antichristi* (Pforzheim, 1505), sig. xii'; cf. for Antichrist and magic in the later medieval *vitae,* see Boveland *et al.* (eds.), *Der Antichrist,* 8,11,33,40-2.

M Malvenda, *De Antichristo,* 105-6. It is noticeable that the references in Rabanus Maurus and Adso to ‘evildoers’ *(malefcos)* among Antichrist’s teachers were taken in the 16th c. to mean magicians and witches.

” Viegas, *Commentarii exegetici,* 726, sec also 730-1; Raemond, *L’Antichrist,* 396. Cf. Suárez, *De Antichristo,* 1033, see also 1036; Castaldi, *Depotestate angelica,* i. 187-96.

M Honofre Maneseal, *Miscellanea de Ires tratados ... De Antichristo el segundo* (Barcelona, 1611), 58; Dionysius von Luxemburg [Capuchin], *Lcben Antichristi. Oder: Aussfuhrliche, grundliche undHistorische Beschreibung Von den zukiinffiigen Dingen der Well* (Vienna, 1716), 83, see also 228 (first pub. 1682). Cf. Fernández de Ayala, */istoria,* 16.

” Walther, *Antichrist,* fo. 29, see also fos. 23*-24’. For Walther’s witchcraft beliefs, see Paulus, *Hexenwahn undHexenprozess, \(A-7.*

» Daneau *Treatise touching Antichrist,* 18 (here the *malejicos* have become ‘witches’); cf. Thomas Tymme, *The figure ofAntichriste. with the tokens ofthe end ofthe world* (London, 1586), sig. E5~.

” Becon, *Actes ofChriste and of Antichrist,* 520.

much more central issue of the Antichrist's actual power to act. The very essence of his appeal as a pseudo-Christ lay in the performance of counterfeit miracles—wonderful effects that were sufficiently striking to be plausible imitations of the real thing, while yet resting on a causation that was either within nature or altogether spurious. Correspondingly, the essential task of the eschatological historian—and, indeed, the vital duty of all Christians living in the last age and still untarnished by antichristianism—was to unmask this pretension. The biblical texts spoke generally of‘great signs and wonders' (Matthew 24:24), as well as individual feats like bringing down fire from the heavens and giving speech to images (Revelation 13:13-15). Medieval sources elaborated others involving prodigies in the natural world, thaumaturgy, and the resurrection of the dead. In each case, the aim of the commentators was to gloss St Paul's warning that these were actions which ‘lied' (2 Thessalonians 2:9-11).-“

This was achieved by redeploying arguments from the field of demonology identical to those which explained the status of all magical actions and witchcraft phenomena. We have already seen that theorists in these matters had to show that the devil's apparent ability to achieve miraculous effects in the natural world was spurious. At the same time, they were obliged to leave him with enormous non-miraculous powers, in order to account for the real effects which formed the credible (and punishable) basis of confessions. The solution was twofold: to place him midway between the production of routine natural effects, which was all that was normally open to ordinary men, and the use of truly supernatural causation, which only God could command; and to acknowledge his compensatory skills in the arts ofdelusion. Demonism was thus the product jointly of *ttiagia* and *praestigia,* a combination of supremely skilful natural science and highly effective illusion.

Since the Antichrist's ‘miracles' were demonic in inspiration and technique, it is not surprising to find them analysed in the same terms. But it is important to recognize the sheer extent of the diffusion of these ideas and their practical implications. In commentaries specializing in the apocalyptic texts in Daniel and Revelation, in expositions of both gospels and epistles, in histories of the last times, and, above all, in works attacking or defending the Papacy, the same concepts which made sense of magic and witchcraft were employed to underpin a whole range of related disputes. The issue of the status of miracles was itself of crucial importance; indeed, one can hardly exaggerate its significance in the religious life and thought of the period. What qualified as a genuinely miraculous phenomenon and how it was brought about were questions which could assume, so to speak, a neutral role in the field of science. But whether or not miracles had ceased after Christ was also an issue in the study of history; and on it hung in large part the validation of both the Protestant and Counter-Reformation churches. To attribute those happening since Christ to the Antichrist or to rescue them from this charge were polemical tasks of some consequence. The

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« For the medieval traditions concerning the miracles of the Antichrist, see Emmerson *Antichrist, passim,* csp. 39-48,74-107; Bousset, *Antichrist Legend,* 175-8.

bringing of the categories of demonology to bear on these controversies is a further example of writers helping to confer what I have called a historical (here, church-historical) dimension on the subjects of magic and witchcraft, and in so doing adding greatly to their general currency.[41]

Perhaps the most elegant attempts to analyse the falsity of the Antichrist's miracles were those conducted according to the commonplace Aristotelian typology. Bellarmine's formulation is a model. They were (he says) always false in respect to final and efficient causes, since they were aimed, definitionally, at the confirmation of error, and had their origin entirely in demonic powers. As to matter, many were not authentic effects at all but 'apparent and deluding to the sight of men, not solid and true'. Even those that were genuine in occurrence were false in their formal nature, 'for sometimes true things will be performed, but which will not be above the power of all nature and, therefore, will not be true miracles in form ... all the Antichrist's miracles will have natural causes, albeit hidden from men.' Those spoken of in Revelation 13 were of this second kind, whereas healing the sick and raising the dead were simply examples of prestidigitation.[42] According to the usual doctrine, the feats of the Antichrist were, therefore, *niira,* not *miracula* and the distinction was only unclear because men were sometimes dazzled by false appearances or fell victim to their own ignorance of nature's occult qualities. Like the devil himself, the Antichrist was a magician, a *natural* magician in terms of his advanced knowledge of the workings of the physical world and his ability to manipulate them, and a *demonic* magician because these were derived from devils. According to Bellarmine, 'All the fathers allege that the Antichrist shall be a noted magician *(magus)'*** For Alessio Porri, a Venetian Carmelite and also an authority on demoniacs and exorcism, he was likewise, 'this great magician', for the Minim Pierre Node, the 'prince of magic', and for Giovanni Castaldi, the 'archimagus'.[44] Sanders said that the devil conferred on him the lying power of witchcraft *(veneficium),* the natural power of prodigy, and the violent power of tyranny.[45] In a summary of Catholic views on the Antichrist, Florimond de Raemond called him a 'great master of magic'.[46] Just as Cain had been the first magician, so, according to Adam von Lcbcnwaldt, a Styrian physician, the Antichrist would be the last.[47] The Protestant view was no different, only the targets; George Pacard cited Bellarmine in writing that the two beasts in Revelation signified the tyranny and enchantments of the Antichrist.[48]

Elaborations of this point took a number of forms, all of them revealing. One very common tactic was to compare the pseudo-miracles of the Antichrist with those of the magicians of Pharaoh Cannes and Jambres), following the text in 2 Timothy 3: 1-8. This was in any case vital to eschatological thought, for it opens with the celebrated warning, ‘in the last days perilous times shall come’. But witchcraft writers too found it useful, with its reference to the ensnaring of‘silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts’. It was thus of some significance that the moral delinquency of the last times should be likened to the magical resistance of Jannes and Jambres—an association of ideas on which those concerned with the magical Antichrist were able to capitalize.[49] Equally frequent were comparisons with the greatest magician of the New Testament, Simon Magus, whose exploits figure so prominently throughout the whole of medieval and early modern demonology. Casting around for other parallels, commentators drew on the whole vocabulary of the magical or quasi-magical arts. The Spanish Jesuit Benito Pcreyra (Pererius) compared the Antichrist’s ability to produce prodigious effects within natural causation to the works ‘of apothecaries, alchemists and distillers’.[50] Georg Scherer, another Jesuit, likened his ‘lying wonders’ to the trickery of the *Schwarzkiinstler* who passed off base metal for gold.[51] Arguing that the antichristian power over nature’s secret forces attributed to the Papacy had never been available to any Pope, Nicholas Sanders suggested that it was found instead in contemporary practitioners of the ‘occult philosophy’—men like Agrippa, Cardano, and Paracelsus.[52] It was the view of the English Puritan William Bradshaw that, ultimately, the strength of the Antichrist surpassed everything that could be found in any known magical context. But it is still significant that this should have been his yardstick: ‘No Juglers or Conjurers, no Witches and Wisards, not the Soothsayers of Egypt, shall come with that efficacic of Satan that he shall, and therefore it must needcs be wonderfull powerfull.’[53]

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[41] Walker,'Cessation of Miracles', 115-19.

[42] Bellarmine, *De Romanipontificis,* 601-2; cf. Malvenda, *De Antichristo,* 393; Porri, *Vasodi Venta,* sig. Kiv^{r}-'; Raemond, *L'Antichrist,* 394-409; Verron, *Chronica ecclesiae,* 490-1. For the Protestant equivalent, see Pacard, *Description de I'antechrist,* 263-5; Thompson, *Antichrist arraigned,* 73-4; Sclatcr,// *briefe exposition,* 148-50.

[42] Bellarmine, *De Romani pontificis,* 601. For a typical sample of the patristic sources, see Malvenda, *De Antichristo,* 319-27.

[44] Porri, *Vaso di t'erild,* sig. Kiv'; Node, *Declamation,* 23; Castaldi, *Depotestate angelica,* t. Z3U-5.

[45] Sanders, *De visibili monarchia ecclesiae,* 749-50. [46] Raemond, *L Antichrist,* 11-12.

[47] Lebenwaldt,JrAr 7>^rJ/r/,ii,tract.8,351.

[41] Pacard, *Description de I'Antechrist,* 262; cf. Bellarmine, *De Romanipontijicis,* 601-2.

The fullest account of these themes, however, is the one offered by Thomas Malvenda. In his *De Antichristo* demonology and eschatology meet as equal partners in a scholastic evocation of the last times. Among his sources for book VI (‘De vitiis Antichristi) are the *De daetnonibus* of Trithemius, the *De slrigitiiagaruin, daeinotiumque mirandis of* Silvestro Da Prierio (Mazzolini), and Bodin’s *Demonomatiie,* as well as the complete galaxy of patristic authorities. The evil arts of the Antichrist are set in the context of a detailed history of magic in order to show that whenever sorcerers and enchanters have accomplished feats that appear to go beyond nature this has involved open complicity with devils by means of ‘depraved ceremonies and rites’. It is clear that Malvenda has in mind the formal, cultic adoration of false gods,

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« c.g. Stevart, *Commentary,* 265; Suarez, ‘De Antichristo’, 1037; Daneau, *Treatise touching antichrist,* 138-9.

[50] Pereira, *Commcntariorum in Daniclemprophetam,* 855-6.

[51] Georg Scherer, *Bericht ob der Bapst zu Rom der Antichrist sey* (Ingolstadt, 1585) 74-5.

[52] *Sanders, De visibilimonarchiaecclesiae,150.*

” William Bradshaw, *A plaine and pithy exposition of the second epistle to the Thessalonians* (London, 1620), 110 (published posthumously by Thomas Gauker); cf. Zanchy, *Speculum christianum,* 60.

as well as familiar dealings with the spirit world. His list of magicians contains some of the usual names—Numa, Cham, Zoroaster, Julian the Apostate, and so on—but also some suspect intellectuals like Pythagoras, Plotinus, and even Plato. This does not suggest topicality, but in book VII ('De doctrina et miraculis Antichristi') Luther and Calvin are added to the list. So too are the magicians of the Baltic lands who, in Olaus Magnus's *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* and in many subsequent demonological discussions of this episode, had reputedly changed men into wolves and then back into human form by 'magical witchcrafts *(magicis maleficiis)'**

It was thus only a short step from antichristian magic to antichristian witchcraft. Malvcnda does not cite cases from the contemporary witch trials but the intellectual scaffolding of his work, as of much of the extensive literature devoted to the Antichrist, is indistinguishable from that which supported the arguments of the witchcraft prosecutors. There are whole passages of his book that could have appeared in any of the major demonologies of the period. Many of the accepted sources for the Antichrist legend, even if they originated in the patristic period, spoke of the prevalence of magic in the last times using terms like *venejicium* and *maleficus* which, by the close of the sixteenth century, had come to signify the full-blown witchcraft associated with diabolical pacts. It was in any case part of that legend that the Antichrist should 'revive the worshipping of devils'.[54] [55] When Robert Rollock reported that for Catholics the Antichrist would be 'detestable, for his sorceries and witchcraftcs', this was not, as he urged, merely a 'fair fable'.[56] It was a rational expectation based on unimpeachable authority and apparently confirmed by contemporary happenings. This is the impression left by the remarks of yet another Jesuit, the Spaniard José de Acosta, whose history of the last times appeared at Lyons in 1592. Acosta had spent seventeen years as the Provincial of the Jesuit College of Peru and finished his career as Rector of Salamanca university. He thought that the Day of Judgement ought to be regarded as imminent and that the turbulent history of antichristianism was a necessary prelude to it. There was every reason for men to feel profoundly disturbed by its onset. Satan was indeed unbound, 'his efforts scarcely held in check or curbed by God'. And among his instruments were witches; 'through magicians, sorcerers, and witches *(strygas* [nr]) and others of the same band of his helpers, he has accomplished many things in former times and does not cease to perform them daily, which astonish ordinary men'—thus preparing the way for the Antichrist. Even so, these were (he added) like trifling games and soothing lullabies compared to what was to follow*.[57]

The identification of the Antichrist as the greatest 'Hexenmeister' was thus achieved long before Dionysius of Luxemburg gave him this label in 1682, citing as evidence the literature of demonology and the honour given to him by all early modern witches (even, he said, in the lawcourts).[58] Moreover, Rollock's remark is not even a reliable indication of Protestant opinion (he was rector of Edinburgh College) for it belittles a relationship—between antichristianism and witchcraft—which was at the hub of one of the major polemical battles of the Reformation. That the Protestants of witch-prosecuting Europe thought of Catholicism as itself no more than a piece of witchcraft scarcely needs any demonstrating, so general was the idea. To a considerable extent it arose from the view that the efficacy associated with the physical artefacts, forms of words, calendrical and liturgical moments, and actual clergy of the Catholic Church was the same as that which operated in the field of magic. That is to say, it rested on causal relationships which, since they were taken to be spurious in the ordinary conditions set by nature and were in any case irrelevant to spiritual well-being, could only lead to the effects that were claimed for them if the devil or his agents (or in some versions, at least, a natural magician) intervened. It was on these grounds that the sacrament of the mass itself (to take the paradigm case) came to be dismissed as a piece of conjuring.[59] However, this was a deduction which could also stem indirectly from the historical opinion that Rome had become the seat of the Antichrist—whose actions were intrinsically magical. Eschatology therefore made an important contribution to this particular polemical campaign, as well as governing the more general expectations of reformers. And in so doing it helped once more to give the subject of witchcraft a major purchase on the thinking of those living in the post-Reformation age.

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[54] **Malvcnda, *De Antichristo.* 313-93; cf. Olaus Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (Rome, 1555), 642—1.**

[55] **Daneau, *Treatise touching Antichrist.* 21; Adso, *De ortu el tempore Antichristi.* 84.**

[w] **Robert Rollock, *Lectures upon thefirst and second epistles ofPaul to the Thessalonians,* ed. Henry Charterisand William Arthur (Edinburgh, 1606), 64.** irno\ ion ACA

[57] **José de Acosta, *De Christo revelato ... simulque de temporibus novissimis* (Lyons, 1592), 3J9-654 (quotations at 507).**

Representative of this process are the arguments in Nicolas Vignier's *Theâtre de l'antechrist* (1610) dealing with the subject of 'lying signs and wonders'. Vignier moves immediately from the usual schematization of the works of the Antichrist in terms of illusions and/or prodigies to a denunciation of Catholic miracles, to the charge that popes and cardinals were magicians, and eventually to an attack on transubstantiation. Catholic exorcisms only worked with the collusion of devils, not despite them; the ritual was, in effect, a conjuration. The healing miracles which followed vows to saints, pilgrimages, and invocations to images stemmed from the same source. When monks were said to have been suddenly transported from one place to another (as in a miracle story told by Caesarius of Heisterbach), it was obvious that Satan had provided the means, 'as he does often enough for magicians and witches'. Even Catholics themselves, like Vitoria and Del Rio, had admitted that church rituals sometimes resembled truly diabolical sorceries *[sortileges vraiment Sataniques]*. In short, its antichristian character meant that the Roman religion was derived not from the teachings of the Apostles but from the doctrines of magicians; the popes were successors (as Philippe Du Plcssis-Mornay also remarked) not of St Peter but of Simon Magus.[60]

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[58] Dionysius von Luxemburg, *Leben Antichristi*, 229-32, see also 84-5.

[59] Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. F. L. Battles, ed. J. T. McNeill (2 vols.; London, 1961), ii. 1376-8, 1416; Valladier, *Divines paralleles*, 187, spoke of Calvin dismissing transubstantiation as an 'illusion diabolique' and making it no better than 'une sorcellerie, et un tour de passe-passe'. Cf. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 53-5, and below, Ch. 35.

Everywhere in the Protestant literature of the Antichrist there are remarks of this sort. It was repeatedly claimed that the antichristian phase of the medieval Papacy had originated in individual acts of sorcery on the part of popes, twenty-two of whom (reported John Napier) had been 'abhominable Necromancers'.[61] This was a charge which reached something of a peak in the lurid denunciations of John Bale in England, Philips Marnix van Sant Aldegondc in the Low Countries, and Georg Schwartz in Germany.[62] In an argument which even those who, like the Englishman Reginald Scot, were sceptical of the reality of witchcraft could adopt, it was said that the period of Catholic ascendancy had been especially rich in diabolical phenomena—'Goblins, Fayries, walking Spirits etc.'[63] The Jesuits were invariably likened to the 'unclean spirits' who appeared from the mouths of the dragon, beast, and false prophet in Revelation 16: 13, and men like Loyola and Xavier to sorcerers. Napier (like most Protestants) thought that Maria L'Annuntiata, the Spanish Prioress and miracle worker, was a 'deceitful witch', and that the repetition of prayers, '... and so to observe a number, as the witches doe, and as Ovid saith of the Witch Medea', was a form of incantation. George Gifford, glossing the sorceries of Babylon of Revelation 18: 23, applied it to the 'witcherie' of Catholicism and complained that Rome had 'played the witch'. According to Thomas Cooper, in a passage that analysed 'Popery' in purely demonological terms, 'Witch-craft became an especiall proppe of Antichrists Kingdome.' To Thomas Brightman, Rome was the 'shoppe' of sorcery. Bullinger argued that Catholic miracles were achieved 'not wythoute the helpe of wytchcrafte'.[64]

In both Catholic and Protestant circles, therefore, the history of the Antichrist was very often written in the language of demonology, and witchcraft accordingly became one of its important ingredients. For Protestant writers the polemical dimension to the subject proved to be the overwhelming interest. But their Catholic adversaries were obliged to discuss the magical aspects of the Antichrist just as thoroughly, in order to show that the Papacy could not possibly be associated with them. Although Malvcnda tried to demonstrate that Luther and Calvin too had performed

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* Vignier, *Theâtre de I'antechrist,* 545-84 (quotations at 561,583); cf. Philippe Du Plessis Momay,J *notable treatise of the church,* trans. I.F. (London, 1580), 305.

[41] Napier, *Plaine discovery,* 56-8,172; cf. Timothy Jackson, *A briefe and plaine ... exposition upon S. Pauls second epistle written to the Thessalonians* (London, 1621), 54. On Napier, see R. G. Clouse, 'John Napier and Apocalyptic Thought', *Sixteenth Century]*. 5 (1974), 101-14.

M John Bale, *The pageant of popes,* trans. J. S[tudlcy] (London, 1574); id., *The second part or contynuacyon of the English votaries* (London, 1551); Philips Marnix van Sant Aldcgonde, *The bee hive of the Romishe church* trans. Isaac Rabbotcnu [pseud. G. Gylpcn] (London, 1579); Georg Nigrinus [Schwartz], *Papistische Inquisition undguldenJlus der Romischen Kirchen* (n.p., 1582).

« Bradshaw, *Plain and pithy exposition,* 123.

M Napier *Plaine discovery,* 57, 60; Gifford, *Sermons upon ... Revelation,* 363—4; Cooper, *Mystery oj witch-craft* 194; Brightman, *Revelation of the Apocalyps,* 276, cf. 338; Heinrich Bullinger, *A commentary upon the seconde epistle ofS. Paul to the Thessalonians,* trans. R. H. (London, 1538), fo. 51. Cypriano de Valera's account of Maria de la Visitaccion was available in Eng. trans, by John Golbume, *Two treatises: the first, of the lives of the Popes and their doctrine,* 420-38.

‘lying signs and wonders’ (the former by attempting to exorcize and the latter by seeking to revive the dead), this particular riposte was not, in the nature of things, a polemical tactic with much potential. This apart, it is again difficult to see how the important connections which this controversy had with witchcraft beliefs can be related to any denominational differences—that is, other than those concerning the targets of attack. It was agreed on all sides that antichristianism and witchcraft were causally related; an age that was marked by one was expected to be marked by the other. What the great Antichrist debate achieved was the temporary absorption of demonological ideas and assumptions into the mainstream of religious argument. It is true, none the less, that it also had the reverse effect of helping to inject religious polarities into the debate about witchcraft, making it much more likely that, from the 1520s onwards, the writers on demonism in each religious party would seek for witchcraft in the ranks of their enemies. This, however, is a matter which we must put on one side for the moment.

24

The Witch as Portent

> And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;
>
> (Luke 21:25)

> A Book of Prodigies is fit, In times Prodigious to be writ.
>
> (John Gadbury, *Natura prodigiorum: or, a discourse touching the nature of prodigies)*

DESPITE its considerable longevity it is difficult not to conclude that European interest in wonders and marvels peaked alongside European interest in witches and demons; after which it waned, gradually but permanently, before a view of nature that claimed to account for even the most abnormal happenings in terms of inexorable laws. Observers agree that it intensified through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and that the accompanying literature reached deluge proportions after the Protestant Reformation and during the Wars of Religion.[1] Johannes Janssen may have spoken in exaggerated terms of German obsessions with the subject but the density of commentaries even on single items like astrological conjunctions, eclipses, stars, and comets reveals that at the very least it became a preoccupation.[2] In addition to numberless individual treatments in the pages of popular ballads, *histoires^* and *Zeitungen,* the age was also distinctive in spawning the prodigy anthology as a book-form. The most influential French example, Pierre Boaistuau's *Histoiresprodigieuses,* went through at least thirty editions in one form and language or another. The study of monsters surged in the same period; so too did accounts of spectacular providences and judgements.[3] Even those who were critical of it testify to a crescendo in

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[1] **Kappler, *Monstres, passim;* Rudolf Schenda, *Diefranzdsische Prodigienliteratur in der zweiten Hdlfte des 16.Jahrhunderts(S\\sn\ch,* 1961),*passim,* csp. 136—9 ('In Frankreich fallt dieBliitedcr Prodigienlitcratur in ganz auffalliger Weise in die Regierungszeit der Konige Francois II, Charles IX, Henri III und Henri IV; sie beginnt ctwa mit dem Prozess des Anne du Bourg [1559] und geht noch ein wenig uber das Edikt von Nantes [1598] hinaus.'); Park and Daston, 'Unnatural Conceptions', 20-54; Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis,* 60-99.**

[2] **Janssen, *History of the German People,* xii. 228-77. On these items, sec Thorndike, *History of Magic,* v. 178-233, and vi. 69—92; Stone, 'Shakespeare and the Sad Augurs', 457-79; E. Labrousse, *L*.Entree de Satume au Lion: L'Eclipse du soleildu 12 aofit 1654* (The Hague, 1974); Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton,* 17-18; Paola Zambelli, 'Fine del Mondo o Inizio della Propaganda?', in *Scienze, credenze occulta, livellidi cultura,* 291-368; ead. (cd.), *'Astrologi Hallucinali*: Starsand the End ofthe World in Luther's Time* (Berlin, 1986), *passim* on the astronomical conjunction of 1524 and fears of a second Flood; Niccoli, *Prophecy and People,* 140-67,alsoon I524;Crouzet, Gitfrn>n</rD/>a,i. 106-14.**

[J] **On prodigy anthologies, see Schenda, *Franzosische Prodigienliteratur, passim,* and id., 'Die deutschen Prodigiensammlungen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderls', *Archivfiir Geschichte des Buchwesens,* 4 (1962), cols. 637-710; on Boaistuau, see Schenda, *Franzdsische Prodigienliteratur,* 26-40. On monsters, see** the concern for such matters. The German Catholic Georg Witzel complained that Lutherans did nothing else but peddle wonders to their followers.[4] But the chorus of approval is easily the more audible. Ambrosius Taurer, the pastor of Wettin in Halle, believed that the whole world was full of signs and wonders waiting to be correctly interpreted. Job Fincel, compiler of an important collection, wrote that 'If all histories are read through it will be found that never at any time did so many signs and wonders happen as in the present day, when one scarcely leaves room for another.' This was also the view of Simon Goulart, Beza's successor at Geneva, who told his readers that the history of the marvels of his own times was 'an abridgement of all the wonders of fore-passed ages' and that pondering it was the best way to come to know and revere God.[5]

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The temptation when faced with past enthusiasms of this rather inaccessible type is to fall back on the explanations that would be given for them if they were still with us, or on those offered for what arc taken to be their modern equivalents. The early modern taste for freaks and wonders is, accordingly, assigned to sensationalism, credulity, or the satisfaction of psychological needs—all of which, by implication, represent lapses from rational belief.[6] Yet as soon as we put the subject back into its proper setting and look seriously at the reasons why it attracted so much attention this response rapidly loses force. We have already seen elsewhere in this study how highly aberrant phenomena came to have a considerable bearing on scientific enquiry (broadly defined) because they pushed scientists, so to speak, to the very limits of their assumptions, forcing them to reconsider both the workings of nature and how these might be freshly classified. It had always been possible to offer a genetic or gynaecological account of monster-births, or to attempt to explain the exotic behaviour of the elements in terms of preternature and natural magic. But, as we saw earlier, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries this investigation of nature's 'prerogative instances' became a scientific imperative. At the same time new impetus was given to a second older debate about what has been called the 'cosmographical' significance of wonders—above all, the moral benefits accruing from the realization that events which appeared to be random or badly in error were nevertheless an inseparable part of universal order and harmony. Claude Kappler has linked the interest in monsters in the later Middle Ages to what he calls the 'consubstantiality

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Park and Daston, Unnatural Conceptions*; M. T. Jones-Davies (cd.), *Alonstres el prodiges au temps de la Renaissance* (Paris, 1980); Niccoli, *Prophecy and People,* 30-60, who says (59) that the 'phenomenon of the *monstra* had pan-European dimensions, at least in an area embracing France, Germany, Spain, and central and northern Italy'. On providences, see Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 89-96.

[4] Janssen, *History of the German People,* xii. 259-61.

[5] Taurer, *Der geistliche ... Feigenbawm,* sig. Fvii'; Job Fincel, *Wunderzeichen. Warhafftige Beschreibung undgrundlich verzetchnus schrecklicher Wunderzeichen und Geschichten, die von A1DXVII. bis aujf ... MDL VI. geschehen undergangen sind, noch derjarzal(]un,* 1556), sig. Bviii'; Simon Goulart, *Admirable histones, concerning the wonders of our time,* trans. E. Grimeston (London, 1607), 'To the Reader'.

[6] See, for example, Schenda, 'Deutschen Prodigiensammlungen', cols. 638, 641, 697-8, and for an especially patronizing account, Robert Mandrou, *Introduction to Modem France, 1500-1640: An Essay in Historical Psychology,* trans. R. E. Hallmark (London, 1975), 71,239-41.

of contraries' in medieval thought a—theme we also explored earlier. It is reassuring of the } ct more prominent (and rational) place that wonders occupied in the cosmology of the next age to open Andreas Engel's *Wider natur und wttnderbuch* (1597) and read at the outset that they were an excellent instance of the principle that only when opposites were placed together could a true understanding be gained of each.[7] In effect, something like the Baconian principle was being put to work in the field of prophecy.[8]

More than anything else, however, it was the fact that marvels and monsters were an integral part of apocalyptic history that made them so popular in the Europe of the witch trials. For the cschatologist, plotting the course of historical change was not merely a matter of noting the general ebb and flow of demonism and the coming and going of the Antichrist. It was also important to interpret, even in quite a precise way, the more individual indications of God's design. And in the last age the most telling signifiers were the specific wonders promised in the prophetic and apocalyptic scriptures—wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, 'fearful sights and great signs... from heaven', 'overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone', and monsters.[9] What they signified was, of course, God's wrath. Wonders were premonitory signs which conveyed the urgent need to repent, the expectation of yet worse calamities, and the coming of the world's end. The history of the future was impossible to write without them.

Speaking of them in these scmiological terms should not be regarded as fanciful. The Augustinian idea that events unfolded like a divine language was a presupposition of the whole view of history we have been considering. Wonder-watchers in early modern Europe were also able to cite to some effect Cicero's view of the etymology of the subject: 'Because they "make manifest" (osteM/wrt), "portend" *(portendunt).* "intimate" *(nionstrant).* "predict" *(praedicunt).* they are called "manifestations", "portents", "intimations", and "prodigies".'[10] A popular suggestion was that wonders were God's way of preaching to mankind, and their growing number was in fact neatly matched by the vogue which developed among German Lutheran clergymen for delivering their own penitential sermons *(Busspredigten)* on eschatological themes. As a Brandenburg pastor wrote in 1595, 'the Lord God, as our true friend, also places sermons for us in the heavens.'[11] Wonders spoke to men and

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[7] Kappler, *Monstres,* 43,207-10 (citing St Augustine's *City ofGod,bk.* xvi, ch. 8: 'for God made all, and when or how' He would form this or that, He knows best, having the perfect skill how' to beautify this universe by opposition and diversity of parts'); Andreas Engel, *Wider natur und wunderbuch. Darin* ro *wol in gemein von wunderwercken dess Himmels, Lujfts, Wassers und Erden, also insonderheit von alien widematurlichen wunderlichen Geschichten grossem theils Europae, Jumemlich der Churfirstlichen Brandenburgischen Mark, vom Jahr490. bissaujf!597. ablaujfendesjahrbeschehen,gehandeltwird* (Frankfurt/Main, 1597), sig. Bii^r^.

[I] See for the cases of Paracelsus and others, Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton,* 21-9,30,32.

[9] The biblical texts arc Matthew 24:6-7; Luke 21:11; Ezekiel 38:20-2; 2 Esdras 5:4-8; Joel 2:30-1. For typical lists, see Leonard Wright, *A summons for sleepers. Wherein most grievous and notorious offenders are cited to bring forth true frutes of repentance, before the day of the Lord now at hand* (London, 1589), 39; Draxe, *An alarum to the last judgement,* 43,90-1.

[10] Cicero, *Dedivinatione,* trans. W. A. Falconer (London, 1922), 325.

[II] Schaller, *Herolt,* sig. Liv*; cf. Caspar Goldwurm, *Wunderzeichen buch* (Frankfurt/Main, 1567), sig. Aii^r^.

women because they conformed to biblically derived expectations; they spoke because of their ever-increasing scale and frequency; and they spoke because their detailed forms were taken to have symbolic meanings. Monsters, in particular, yielded eschatological messages. Contemporary etymology turned *monstrum* into *monstrat* (and *monel)* and *monstre* into *monstrer.* Arnaud Sorbin, the bishop of Nevers and court preacher to Charles IX, compared them to pictures, no detail of which was too small or insignificant to yield instruction.[12] They were, in fact, a form of announcement which, when correctly read, told of the special sins that had occasioned them or the particular nature of God's chastisement, or the nearness of the Last Judgement. In one celebrated case no interpretation was needed at all; a 'hideous monster child' born in Cracow in 1543 lived for only a few hours but died with the cry, 'Watch, your Lord and God cometh!'[13]

There is every indication that as eschatology itself became more and more prominent in sixteenth-century readings of history, so it came to dominate among the incentives for analysing wonders. Kappler suggests that even by the end of the previous century cosmology had given way to history as a frame of teratological reference. At the same time the hitherto extended vocabulary for describing abnormal phenomena tended to become absorbed by the single term 'prodigy', in its specific Latin sense as a sign of future events.[14] 'In the early years of the Reformation', it has been said, 'the tendency to treat monsters as prodigies... was almost universal.'[15] By 1532 Frederick Nausea of Weissenfeld was posing the question which it eventually became commonplace to ask: why had more prodigies appeared in his age than in any previous one? His answer also became a model: 'Such a number of great wonders close to our time certainly portends that the last age is near at hand, that the end of the world is indeed at the door, that the present age is utterly ruined, and that the death of it (as we might say) is indeed approaching to confirm the prodigies in every way.'[16]

Above all, it was the new anthologies that established the preference for eschatological interpretation. The very form is itself revealing, part the product of an almost universal tendency in Renaissance scholarship, but mainly the outcome of the view that the sheer density of fresh prodigies, and hence their overall significance, could only be brought home to an uncaring public by the methods of the anthologist. In the first and perhaps the most influential collection, the *Prodigiorum ac ostentorum chronicon* of Conrad Wolffhart (Lycosthenes), prodigies and monsters were firmly identified as warnings of the imminent destruction of the world and true harbingers of the Last Judgement—a point reiterated by Wolffhart's English imitator Stephen Bateman.[17] Finccl likewise justified his three books of wonders by arguing that the two most reliable testimonies of the nearness of Judgement Day and of the calamitous events preceding it were the prophecies of scripture and the *Wunderzeichen* of the years after 1517.[18] The same stress is (as we shall see) even more apparent in the compilations of Caspar Goldwurm and Andreas Engel, as well as in the important analysis of monsters by Christoph Irenaeus. Much later, at the close of the seventeenth century, there was another wave of eschatologically inspired collecting, with Baxter in Old England and the Mathers in New England encouraging ministers to record prodigious events and submit them for publication in omnibus editions of God's 'illustrious providences'.[19]

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[12] Arnaud Sorbin, *Traictddes monstres,* trans. F. de Belleforcst, in Boaistuau, *Histoires prodigieuses,* iii (vol. v). fo. 117.

[11] For one typical report among many, see Boaistuau, *Hiitoiretprodigieuses,* i (vol. i) fos. 18'-22'.

” Kappler, *Monstres,* 235-6,245; Schenda, 'Deutschen Prodigiensammlungen', cols. 637,639—10.

[15] Park and Daston, 'Unnatural Conceptions', 24.

[14] Cited by Schenda, 'Deutschcn Prodigiensammlungen', col. 646.

[17] Conrad WolfDiart [Lycosthenes], *Prodigtorum ac ostentorum chronicon, quaepraeter naturae ordinem,*

Nevertheless, as with eschatology as a whole, the idea that wonders signified the end of the world was by no means a Protestant (or German) monopoly. In 1575 the Catholic professor of medicine at the university of Louvain, Cornelius Gemma, published a substantial treatise called *Cosmocritice, sen de naturae divinis characterisnius.* As its title suggests, the purpose of the work was to account for prodigious happenings in cosmological terms—in effect, to trace them to the effects of sin working themselves out in parallel disorders in the world at large, in human society, and in man himself. But Gemma also had the practical aim of founding a new science—what he called an *ars cosmocritica.* Following the practice of the physicians in interpreting symptoms as 'critical signs' of approaching diseases, this would enable individual prodigies to be read as indications of more fundamental changes and confusions to come. Although he in fact analysed only those which had occurred in the Low Countries and neighbouring areas since 1555, it is clear that Gemma thought that these were of sufficient stature to herald (saving God's intervention) a final dissolution. Citing verse by verse Christ's account of the last times in Matthew 24 and Paul's warnings to the Thessalonians, he argued (much in the manner of the Germans) that each specific prophecy could be matched with a wonder from the recent past. The religious dissensions of the age were an especially telling 'critical sign'; no better referents could be found anywhere in history for the coming of the 'false prophets' and the Antichrist than the bitter controversies and doubts of the mid-sixteenth century.[20]

***motum, cl operationem, el in superioribus et his inferioribus mundi regionibus, ab exordio mundi usque ad haec nostra tempora, acciderunt* (Basel, 1557), 'Epistola', csp. sig. a3* (see also the German version, *Wunderwerck,* trans. Johann Hcroldt (Basel, 1557), with Heroldt's own comments on the marvels of the last times in his ' Vorrcdc'); Stephen Bateman, *The doome warning all men to the fudgemente: Wherein are contayned for the most parte all the straunge prodigies hapned in the worlde, with divers secrete figures of Revelations tending to mannes stayed conversion towardes God* (n.p., 1581), dedication, and 380 (this work was also, in part, a trans, of Wolffhart's collection).**

[11] See the dedication in Fincel, *Wunderzeichen,* and the prefatory remarks in his other collections, *Der anderteil, Wunderzeichen*(Frankfurt/Main, 1566),and *Wunderzeichen, Derdritte Teil(Jena,* 1562). Foran account of Fincel's eschatological and demonological interests, see Heinz Schilling, 'Job Fincel und die Zeichcn der Endzeit', in Wolfgang Brueckner (cd.), *Volkserzdhlung und Reformation: Ein Handbuch zur Tradierungund Funktion von Erzdhlstojfen und Erzdhlliteraturin Protestantismus* (Berlin, 1947), 326—93; cf. Schenda, 'Deutsche Prodigicnsammlungen', cols. 652-6; Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis,* 88-90.

[19] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 94-6; Lamont, *Richard Baxter,* 27-75; Hall, *Worlds of Wonder,!* 1-116.

[20] Gemma, *De naturae divinis characterismis,* bk. 2, 156-82; on Gemma, see Ccard, *La Nature et les prodiges,* 365-73.

The most important French anthologists took a somewhat less academic line, but their work is just as revealing of Catholic opinion. In Boaistuau's pioneering collection, the theme is indeed muted, despite the eschatology of his earlier work, *Le Theatre du monde* (1558). In his imitators it is as striking as among the Lutherans. Francois de Bellcforcst pointed as usual to the flux of contemporary prodigies and drew parallels between his own France and eleventh-century Germany, when the same experiences had led men and women to conclude that the reign of the Antichrist had arrived and that Doomsday was upon them.[21] Roderic Hoyer thought that a seven-headed monster born at Euscrigo in the Milanese in 1578 could be interpreted in the light of the seven-headed mount of the 'Whore of Babylon', with its allusion to the seven hills of the city of Babylon (Revelation 17: 3, 9); 'Seeing even that the world tends towards its close, being in every way already in its last age, and that we have reached the height of all malediction and ungodliness.'[22] In identical fashion, although here drawing directly on Wolffhart, Arnaud Sorbin linked the appearance in 1465 of a child with the ears of a hare to the apocalyptic prophecy in 2 Timothy 4:4 ('And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables'). What the text originally promised, the monster had now announced to be imminent.[23] The *Recueil memorable* of the *normand* aristocrat Jean de Marconville opens with another typical claim in which the customary catalogue of natural wonders—blight, hail, storms, earthquakes—and the interpretative frameworks of Matthew 24 and Luke 21 are offered in support of the contention that 'we are those on whom the end of the ages has fallen'. In fact, for Marconville, as for Belleforest, the most astonishing prodigy of all was not some specific event, but the entire condition in which France was placed by the onset of the religious wars. 'The present age is more monstrous than natural,' wrote Belleforest in his dedication to the natural philosopher Jean Willemin. However bizarre its contents, nothing could be more appropriate, therefore, than to write a book about monsters.[24]

The suggestion that prodigies merely gratified a somewhat irrational hunger for the sensational seems quite inadequate to account for such serious and wholly justifiable historical interests. It cannot even cope with what, after all, was the subject's essence—the very strangeness of the phenomena. In early modern Europe there was undoubtedly a developing taste for ever more exotic examples of the prodigious. But to attribute this solely to the re-exciting of jaded palates is to miss the point badly. For contemporaries, the more and more bizarre a wonder proved to be, the greater was its illocutionary force. Only by happenings of unprecedented strangeness could

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[21] Francois de Belleforest, in Boaistuau, *Histoires prodigieuses,* ii (vol. iii). 339; Schenda, *Franzosische Prodigienliteratur,* 71-5.

[22] Roderic Hoyer, in Boaistuau, *Histoires prodigieuses,* iii (vol. iv). 49-50, cf. 72; Schcnda, *Franzosische Prodigienliteratur,!* 5-6.

[22] Arnaud Sorbin, in Boaistuau, *Histoires prodigieuses,* iii (vol. v). 95; Schcnda, *Franzosische Prodigienliteratur,* 77-9.

” Marconville, *Recueil memorable,* sig. Aiii'-, fos. l'-14', see also 16'; Belleforest, in Boaistuau, *Histoires prodigieuses,* ii (vol. iii). dedication (dated 1570), cf. 120, 192; Schcnda, *Franzosische Prodigienliteratur,62-3.*

God waken the age from its moral torpor and carelessness and alert men and women to the consequences of acute depravity. Both in form and function prodigies had to have the fundamental character of being arresting. Certainly, this means that we are dealing with a cult of the sensational. But this turns out to be a quality already allowed for, even demanded, by the cultural form itself and not, therefore, something to which it can be said to have pandered. If, moreover, it was intrinsic to the very idea of genuine prodigies that they should be sensational, then this feature of them scarcely requires any additional explaining.

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The need to interpret rather than apologize for the outmoded aspects of early modern culture is urged often enough in this book. But in this context, too, it has direct relevance for the understanding of witchcraft beliefs. This is because the vogue for prodigies not only coincided in time with the flourishing of demonology, but overlapped with it in content too. The literature we have been considering and the ideas about history that informed it were not merely capable of absorbing the demonic—they were markedly receptive to it. That the activities of demons and witches were very often prodigious was self-evident. That they were expected to abound in the last days became (as we have seen) a commonplace; witchcraft authors themselves placed them in prodigy-based narratives.[25] That they might yield readings as precise as those obtained from monsters with seven heads and hares' ears was thus no more than a practical challenge to eschatological hermeneutics. In principle, at least, it was perfectly feasible. 'Nothing but dread and alarm,' preached Leonard Breitkopf in a Good Friday sermon in 1591, 'devils and spectres, sorcerers, witches, prodigies, earthquakes, fiery signs in the heavens, three-headed visions in the clouds, and numberless other signs of God's wrath. ... And these secret, devilish arts are multitudinous, and the whole world is deceived with them, so that it is verily high time that the Day of Judgment came.'[26] The important point is that in this area, too, demonology found, so to speak, a natural home. It contributed significantly to the scope of prodigy literature from its own enormous fund of narratives, all the while reinforcing the warnings of eschatological historians and preachers. In return, it gained a yet greater hold on the thoughts of readers and audiences as a subject of importance and relevance in a declining age. And to this (in part) we can attribute both its very great diffusion in the Europe of the later sixteenth century and its considerable cogency for the minds of that period.

The process of absorption was already signalled at the close of the previous century when fresh eschatological speculations were accompanied by the gradual demonizing of monsters—a process which Kappler describes as the 'interpenetration' of teratology and demonology, and which he illustrates by the absorption of the *Malleus maleficarum* into the literature of monstrosity. Monsters became the products of demonically inspired mimesis or simply the vehicles of Satan; demons themselves became monsters.[27] A hundred years later the *Malleus* was still frequently searched by collectors of prodigies, but so too were the works of Weyer, Bodin, Rémy, Del Rio, and Lavater. Rudolf Schenda placed the vogue for devil-books *(Tetifelbiicher)* alongside the flourishing of the prodigy anthologies, suggesting a common inspiration; Christopher Baxter suggested that Bodin's four chapters on satanic witchcraft 'read rather like prodigy literature'.[28] Individual episodes of demonic activity, spirit-possession, and witchcraft were recorded in pamphlets with titles *(Erschrockliche zeitung ...\ Histoire prodigieuse* ...; etc.) and styles of description that evoke just as strongly the contemporary reaction to the raining of blood, the appearance of armies in the skies, or the birth of creatures with hideous deformities.[29] In *Signes and wonders from heaven* (1645), witchcraft trials from East Anglia and Stepney in London competed for attention as tokens of God's displeasure alongside comets, terrible storms, a monster kitten, and a hermaphrodite 'without a nose, hands or feet or legs, [and] one car that grew in the neck'.[30]

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[25] See, for example, Crespet, *Livres*, fo. 96”*.

[24] Cited in Janssen, *History of the German People*, xii. 277.

Anthologists drew heavily on these printed sources, on an ever expanding circulation of stories from the witch trials, and on familiar cases from their own experience or locality—as well as pillaging each other's works. In Wolffhart's *Prodigiorum ac ostentorum chronicon,* for instance, the result was a flavouring of seven examples ranging in time from the case of a witch executed at Oberndorf in the Black Forest in 1532 for joining with the devil to burn down the nearby town of Schiltach, to the possession by devils of over seventy children in an orphanage in Rome in 1554.[31] Fincel's collection is likewise scattered with demonic apparitions and assaults, mostly recorded in Saxony and Hesse.[32] Since Wolffhart, in particular, was a model for collectors elsewhere in Europe, his demonological cases were subject to widespread repetition. All the same, revealing local additions were made to the canon. Thus Stephen Bateman, in his 77/e *doome warning all men to the Judgemente,* reported for the year 1570 that 'Manye witches were executed in Essex that had wroughte monstrous cruelties in killing of children and cattel.' This seems a somewhat laconic statement, given the considerable attention paid to this county by more recent historians of witchcraft. But it reminds us that contemporaries could see things in a very different light. Like all the prodigies in his book, witchcraft was something which, for Bateman, 'foretokened' man's destruction:

> as in the time of oldc, haylcs, fires from heaven, thunderings, Eclipses, biasing starres, Elemcntall shewes of armies, raining of blood, milke, stones, earth, figures of dead bodyes, and instrumentes of warre, besides dreadfull voyces, after sundrye manners: On the Earth

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[27] Kappler, *Monstres.* 217-29, and csp. 245-53,294,

“ Schenda, 'Deutschen Prodigiensammlungen'.cols. 685-6; Christopher Baxter, 'Jean Bodin's *De la Demonomante dessoraers:* The Logic of Persecution*, in Anglo (cd.), *Damned Art.* 91

” For the prominence of demonological themes in the literature of wonders,'see Schenda, *Franzosische Prodigienhteratur.* 45-52; cf. Schenda, 'Franzosische Prodigicnschriften*, 150 166 ('Von dcr Prodigienliteratur lebte vorallemdieHexenliteraturim 17. Jahrhundert weiter').'

w *Signet and wonders from heaven* (London, 1645), 1-2.

[11] Wolflhart, *Chronicon.* 550,555,560,592-4,615,616,644.

” Fined, *Wunderzeichen.* sigs. Giiii'-Gv', Gviii", Sii*-Siiii^{r}, Sviii'-TF.

> deformed shapes both of men, byrdes, beastes, and fishes after which of every of these death of princes, alteration of Kingdomes transmutations of religion, treasons, murthers, thefte, inceste, Whoredome, Idolatrie, usurie, revenge, persecution, sworde, fyre, famine, hunger' death and damnation, presently followed.

The catalogue of portents is traditional enough, but witchcraft on a scale sufficient to attract Bateman's attention was a new phenomenon in Essex, as elsewhere. Its inclusion in the list tells us, therefore, that it too could be absorbed by the overall view of history at work here. It became intelligible in terms of beliefs about how strange events were so patterned in time as to yield vital messages. In terms of both historiography and eschatology witchcraft became another item in what Bateman called the 'Chronicle of Doome'.[33]

In the same fashion demonism and witchcraft were brought well within the range of interests of the French experts. Boaistuau's very first entries are in fact 'prodigies of Satan', instances of especially blatant worship of devils taken from the oracles of Apollo and the practices of the Brahmin priesthood.[34] In some cases, anthologists were drawn into discussions about whether individual marvels, especially monsters, were demonically caused, debates that take us once again into the territory of incubus and succubus theory, as well as to the sort of examples familiar from the pages of the witchcraft theorists. Boaistuau dealt with the apocalyptic monster from Cracow in these terms, as also the case of a woman of Constance who, having confessed to carnal relations with a demon, eventually gave birth to a quantity of

> iron nailes, thicke tronchions, or endes of knotted staves, glasse, bone, lockes of haire, hardes of flaxe, hemp and stones, with other trumperie of lothsome and hideous regard, wherof the divel by his conjuration and other hellish arte, had made an assembly in that place.

Once established as (ultimately) divine works, such cases could be seen in eschatological terms as special tokens of God's coming judgement.[35] In the anthologies of Bellcforest and Marconville, both largely devoted to an eschatological reading of prodigies, some of the entries even take the form of miniature demonologies, a fact which nicely illustrates the full 'interpenetration' of this form of historical thought and witchcraft beliefs by the second half of the sixteenth century. Marconville's starting-point, for example, is a piece of image magic directed at Francis I and reported by the historian Robert Gaguin. This leads to a general consideration of witchcraft both in the ancient world and in contemporary Europe. Marconville considers the usual arguments for and against the reality of metamorphosis and the power of demonic illusions. Eventually he focuses on the type of witches *(lamiae, strigae)* who use the diabolical unguents and fly to sabbats. Here too individual case histories of what was undoubtedly the most 'prodigious' kind of witchcraft were assimilated to the most traditional kind of portent. The intention was to reinforce the impression created by ‘prodigious lightnings, tempests, storms, and thunderings, and earthquakes so wonderful and seasons so unseasonable, that it is thought that we are at the climax of the world and the end of the ages’.[35]

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[33] Bateman, *Doome warning all men,* 396, 384, dedication; other witchcraft stories at 319-20, 344—5, 353,406.

[34] Boaistuau,//tfrtwwpnN/igiewrJji (vol. i).fos.Bii'(—I)-4«

[35] Ibid. fos. 18'-22', quotation from the English trans, by E. Fenton, *Certame secrete wonders of nature, containing a description of sundry strange things, seming monstruous (London,* 1569), fos. 14-18'.

But for the very best examples of this association of ideas we should return finally to Lutheran Germany, and specifically to the wonder-books of Caspar Goldwurm and Andreas Engel. Goldwurm, a key figure of the Protestant Reformation in the territories of Nassau-Weilburg, published his book of *W'titiderzeichen* first in Frankfurt am Main in 1557 and again in 1567 and 1573. Even his dedication to Philipp, the landgrave of Hesse, might stand as a model summary of the themes we have been exploring. In the last and most miserable epoch of human affairs, wonders were to be seen as a further idiom of the Word of God. They were a channel of communication through which God ‘preached’ his intention to bring history to an end. The Bible indicated both the specific ‘language’ that he would adopt (Luke 21: 25: ‘And there shall be signs ...’)and the punishments that would fall upon those who failed to read or respond to the message. Goldwurm’s purpose was to make sure that, given the prophecies of Christ and the Apostles and the repeated warnings of the clergy, Christians living in the last times did not repeat the follies of those living in the first, who, unheedful of their own prophets, had been overtaken by a dreadful vengeance.[37]

The book which follows has been said to lack cither organization or system yet its structure is a further crucial illustration of the eschatological mentality at work. The central sections (parts 2 to 5), it is true, arc taken up with the stock-in-trade of the prodigy anthologists—specimens of ‘providences’ (punishments of the ungodly) and wonders in the skies, in the elements, and in terrestial events. And the last category certainly embraces a motley assortment, ranging from prodigies in social and political behaviour, through aberrations in the animal world and examples of monster-births, to the spectacular moral delinquencies of contemporary Germans. But the whole sequence is framed symmetrically by two sections in which God and the devil confront each other across post-incarnation history. The book opens (part 1) with God’s own personal wonders—miracles, ofcoursc—which, for the Lutheran Goldwurm, are the defining feature of New Testament times. And it closes with those corresponding actions which must, if the overall shape of Christian history is to be preserved, characterize the last times—the false ‘miracles’ of demons and witches. Goldwurm opens part 6 with the familiar but significant formulas of eschatological historiography:

“ Marconville *Recudl memorable* fos, 95--103’, sec also for other discussions of demonological subjec [illegible] 14–1 ,37 3 e, “.’/o S 6o-J ’4n ’ ^7” 8 '*120 ’ Cf- Bclle forcst>,n Boaistuau, *Histoires prodigieuses,* ii (vol. iii). 87-118, sec also 71-87; Boaistuau, *H.stotm prodtgituta,* i (vol. i). fos. 116-36' (on the possibility of demonic illusions and sorcery in visions and apparitions).

’’Goldwurm, *Wunderzckhcn buch* dedication, csp. sig. Aii-’. There is a full account of Goldwurm and his book of wonders in Bern ward Denekc, Kaspar Goltwurm: Ein Lutherischer Kompilator zwischen Uberlieferung und Glaubc , in Brueckner (cd.), *Volherzdhlung und Reformation,* 124-77.

In his Revelation John announces that the devil and Satan is set free from his chains and will wreak all kinds of death and affliction on the human race, as we perceive and discover in fatal calamities, such are his devilry and tyranny, especially in these last, upside-down times of ours. For yes, it is apparent and obvious to see that Satan and his company are as if completely set free, and are no more in the swine (as reported in the gospel of Mark 5) but go about in living people.[3]’

There is, then, a logic in Goldwurm’s *Wunderzeichen buck* and it is nothing less than the logic of the historical process he seeks to encapsulate; the work *has* to conclude with a demonology. In it are a short history of the devil, a more substantial account of the traditional nine orders of spirits and demons, a survey of demonic assaults on mankind, and a set of stories to illustrate the activities of magicians and witches. Many of the last are taken from *Malleus niale/icaruin* or from Nider’s *Fonnicarius,* and indeed most of Goldwurm’s tales originate in that late-medieval stockpile of devil narratives where eschatologists and witchcraft writers alike found common inspiration.

The sense in which demonology was actually required to complete a reading of history as a sequence of marvels is even stronger in Andreas Engel’s *Wider naturund wunderbnch* published in Frankfurt am Main in 1597. Engel (or Angelus) was a preacher in the Mittelmark and his treatise was one of many occasioned by a rash of prodigious happenings in Brandenburg in the 1590s. In terms of bulk it is dominated by a catalogue of individual wonders grouped under typical headings. Engel passes from multiple suns and comets, airy apparitions and terrible storms, to plagues of locusts and grasshoppers, to monsters, and eventually to earthquakes and rains of blood. On the way he inserts a chapter dealing with the local demoniacs. With the usual rebellions, wars, and plagues, and in line with scriptural prophecy, these indicate that Judgement Day is near at hand *(vorder Thiirsey).* And as long as God’s genuine signs can be distinguished from the delusions created by the devil those awaiting it can adopt the proper eschatological stance.[39]

This seems rather an important stipulation, for Engel opens his book by arguing that the definition of a *wunderwerk* must be broad enough to encompass anything, ‘that is done either by God or by the accursed devil, contrary to our reason and contrary to the usual course and order of nature’J[0] Just as God works either immediately (Creation, Flood) or through angelic, human, and natural agents (annunciations, prophecies), so the devil follows suit; the history of the Papacy was his unaided effort, while magicians and false prophets were the principal media of his wonder-working powers. Since Engel also acknowledged the possibility of naturally caused prodigies, it is clear that his eschatology depended on a good deal of natural philosophical decision-making. To read the meaning of *Wunderzeichen* one must first attribute them correctly.[41]

” Goldwurm, *Wunderzeichenbuch,* fo. cxxiv'; Dencke, ‘Kaspar Goltwurm’, 152-65.

” Engel, *Wider naiurundwunderbuch,* sigs. Gvii’-Tiv’, csp. Tn'''.

[40] Ibid. sigs. Bv'-Bvi'.

«i See also Wolffhart, *Wunderwerck,* trans. Heroldt, ‘Vorredc’ [by Hcroldtj; Christoph Stymmcl, Of course, their causation did vary, and the astute Christian could trace the appropriate messages. Engel's definition was flexible enough to allow for the usual demonic *mira*—wonderful to men and beyond nature's accustomed course but ultimately within its bounds—as well as for outright ontological cheating. God's own wonders were spectacles of a just wrath but also reassurances of just deserts; the copies merely signified present superstition and idolatry and future (that is, eternal) punishment. Yet both were essential for the general expectation that the apocalypse was at hand, which was Engel's main concern. The very falseness of the demonic wonders in Brandenburg identified them with the warnings of Matthew 24 and guaranteed them a necessary (because prophetic) place in the final scheme of things. Engel concluded:

> Since so many different signs have occurred, and now, within two years, the devil has undertaken most wonderful exploits even here with us in the Mark, in Fricdcberg, Spandau, and elsewhere, such a thing is surely an indication that the end of the world is near at hand, and that our Lord God will soon hasten here with his Judgement, to take to himself his elect and throw the unbelieving into the abyss of Hell.[42]

Kurtzer Unterricht von Wunderwerken (Frankfurt/Oder, 1567), sigs. Vii'-Bbvii'; Johann Marbach, *I'on Mirackeln und Wunderzeichen* ([Strasburg?], 1571), *passim-,* Georgius Zcämann, *Newer wunderspiegelodtr zehen Wunder- und Waifarts Betha Predigen* (Kempten, 1624), 28-61; Thorndike, *History of Magic,* v. 399 (on Mclanchthon and aerial images).

[42] Engel, *Wider natur und wunderbuch,* sigs. Fiii'-Fiiii', cf. Cvii'.

25

Witch-Cleansing

> And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers.
>
> (Malachi 3: 5)

> I would yet have it plainly known that I am a sworn enemy to witches, and that I shall never spare them, for their execrable abominations, and for the countless numbers of them which are seen to increase every day so that it seems that we are now in the time of Antichrist, since, among the signs that are given of his arrival, this is one of the chief, namely, that witchcraft shall then be rife throughout the world.
>
> (Henri Boguct, *Examen of witches)*

> Only a theory of *adjustment* will resolve the paradox: that burning of witches came easily to men who already believed that they were locked in a struggle with Antichrist.
>
> (W. M. Lamont, *Godly Rule)*

WHATEVER its finer shading, historians have detected in apocalyptic thought a number of primary features (one would not, I think, wish to call them 'functions') which explain its appeal to those who believe they are living in the last age. Most obviously, it has very great explanatory power in revealing the general unity of history and in placing individual events in a planned and inexorable process which is about to be completed. As Bernard McGinn has written, it represents in this guise 'a mirror held up to the age, an attempt by each era to understand itself in relation to an all-embracing teleological scheme of history'.[1] To this particular mode of self-understanding may be attributed many of the eschatological skills that flourished in early modern Europe—the exegesis of scriptural prophecy, the historical sub-science of chronology, the interpretation of signs and portents, and so on. Of the things that are explained, the presence of evil and its manifestation in more and more terrible forms are naturally paramount. To match its explanatory force, therefore, apocalypticism also has great polemical value. In situations of conflict, it identifies and consolidates enmities and, brooking no neutrality or vacillation, brings the sharpest definition to moral causes and the bitterest hostility to the antagonisms they generate—all the while promising, indeed guaranteeing, imminent success and final ascendancy. Again, these defining, fortifying, and consoling attributes found plentiful application in early modern culture—in the self-images of the faithful, in the designation of religious foes, and in the creation and defence of new churches and sects. It is not easy to make sense of the mental stances adopted by the warring religions of that age without invoking the thought-patterns of the Book of Revelation.

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[1] McGinn, *Visions of the End,* p. xiv.

Yet pending the consummation of history, eschatology is not only a doctrine of the last times; it is a doctrine of the last actions—a moral code. Apocalyptic history has one more dimension, its prescriptive implications for the behaviour of Christians. At the very least it demands urgent introspection with a view to repentance and a timely amendment of life. It also speaks emphatically of remaining free from the contaminating influence of evil; *homo apocalypticus* is preoccupied with dangers to purity. Stronger still is the injunction to resist the forces of darkness, at least by denunciation and possibly by direct action. No human agent can destroy the Antichrist or bring history to a close but it is open to men and women to prepare the ground. Such was the advice given in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Living in the last times had consequences for the conduct of the spirit, and the godly were expected to take practical steps to achieve a proper state of preparedness. Above all, they should beware the risk of pollution; the 'unmasking of the Antichrist' and the 'crying down of Babylon' were catch-phrases of the age. Only the scope of actions that might anticipate those of God was ambiguous. Preaching and publishing were absolute obligations and formal secession or the taking up of arms by the temporal ruler were acceptable responses to persecution; the private inauguration of apocalypse or millennium by individuals or small groups of enthusiasts pre-empted the divine will and was wholly unacceptable. The responses of the majority no doubt fell somewhere between the extremes represented, on the one hand, by mystics like the Englishman John Everard and the *lilloise* Antoinette Bouriguon, and, on the other, by the instant utopias of Münster and the Fifth Monarchists.

If witchcraft beliefs are to be brought within the compass of this particular view of history, these various aspects of its general character as a set of expectations ought to be as visible in early modern demonology as they are in early modern eschatology. Looking back we can see that this is certainly the case with its capacity to explain. As far as questions about the reasons for the presence and startling increase of magic and witchcraft were concerned, writers on demonology derived considerable intellectual reassurance from the view that history was shaped apocalyptically. Their findings (I have argued) fitted comfortably into its overall pattern of events and acted as an important confirmation of its internal logic. The same is true with regard to the capacity to mould perceptions of evil by eliminating any suggestion of middle ground, and driving minds to the polemical extremes of the Christ/Antichrist distinction. This too was a trait in demonology and is shown, in particular, in its interest in the Antichrist and in antichristianism. As we saw at an earlier stage, the literature of witchcraft was itself an exercise in antithesis.

This still leaves us with the sphere of actions. Was the eschatological imperative to shun the defiling influence of antichristianism and prepare for its destruction also reflected in demonological practice? Was the theoretical defence of witch trials consonant with the demand for the final purification of religious life; was witchcraft prosecution itself seen as a way of preparing the ground for the end of the world? With his reading in the Antichrist literature of Florimond de Raemond and Claude Caron, Henri Boguct certainly seems to have thought so. Other 'excitable' intellectuals like, it has been suggested, de Lancre and Bodin, would have agreed.[2] Even the lawyer Remy, at the very end of his *Daemonolatreiae,* spoke the kind of language associated with this idea. Judicial leniency towards witches, he said, was a kind of blasphemy against God: 'This is to delay the coming of His Kingdom; for nothing can so firmly establish it as the routing, overthrow and destruction of all His enemies, together with Satan, who is their Captain.'[3] It was in pursuit of this kind of thinking that W. M. Lamont hazarded the view' that, in England, 'it was no accident that the witch-hunting of the late 1640s should follow* the millenarian expectations of the early 1640s.' A messianic desire to purify bridged the hopes for 'godly rule' and the eradication of witches; 'after Thomas Brightman, Matthew Hopkins; after the Apocalypse-seeker, the Witch-finder', was Lamont's aphoristic proposal.[4]

The weight of the material presented in the preceding chapters would alone prompt this sort of suggestion. But an additional incentive to take it seriously is the conjunction in the experience of many non-European societies of millenarian movements with 'witch-cleansing' cults. In the tribal settings made familiar by the traditional social anthropology of Africa, measures taken to counteract or confront sorcery and witchcraft normally signify nothing about the overall course of affairs and its cosmological foundation; they are simply an aspect of everyday routine. The wholesale administering of witch-detecting cults to initiates in a popular movement embracing many districts and communities has altogether different implications. The governing principle is a promise of the discovery of *all* sorcerers, either by their immediate confession and/or demise or through the assurance of their automatic death should they attempt to practise in the future. Acting like an ordeal (and sometimes consisting of actual ordeals), initiation removes sorcery or neutralizes it by the threat of terrible sanctions. In societies which attribute misfortune, sickness, and death to sorcerers the effect is the inauguration of a period of collective immunity from tribulation. And from these concrete benefits stem more general hopes for 'moral renewal, a clean start and an end of conflict and passion'.[5] These may very well be short-lived but at the moment when the cult takes hold the 'cleansing' of witches offers the prospect of an 'instant millennium'.[6]

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[2] Briggs, Commwni/iw fl/TWar/J 95. [1] Remy, *Demonolatry.* 188.

[4] Lamont, *Godly Rule.* 98-100 (citing Trevor-Roper, 'Witches and Witchcraft', *Encounter.* May 1967, 15: 'The basic evidence of the Kingdom of God had been supplied by Revelation. But the Father of Lies had not revealed himself so openly. To penetrate the secrets of his Kingdoms, it was therefore necessary to rely on indirect sources. These sources could only be captured members of the enemy intelligence service: in other words, confessing witches.'); cf. Lamont, 'Richard Baxter', 73 (citing Alan MacFarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study* (London, 1970), 141: '[villagers] already imbued with millenarian concepts, viewed the witch-finders with considerable excitement*). For scepticism regarding Lamont's suggestion, see Capp, *'Godly Rule'.* 110.

[5] Mary Douglas, *The Lele of the Kasai* (London, 1963), 244—58 (quotation at 258); cf. cad., 'Techniques of Sorcery Control in Central Africa*, in J. Middleton and E. H. Winter (eds.), *Witchcraft and Sorcery in East Africa* (London, 1963), 123-4,138-9; cad., *Purity and Danger.* 170-2.

[4] For this idea and a bibliography of the subject to 1970, see R. G. Willis, 'Instant Millennium: The

The same association of ideas is at work when, for their part, religious movements animated by millennial aims issue in both the social thaumaturgy of witch detection and in actual healing. It has been said, for example, that it is ‘common for the prophets of millenary cults to offer these limited benefits in addition to the promise of the final regeneration of the world’, and that ‘in any culture area millenary, healing and witchfinding cults will be found to have common elements of miracle, revelation and ritual.’[7] It may well be that it is practical anti-sorcery that secures for these movements their popular backing. In some cases, the sources for millenarian expectations are indigenous to cultures. Even so the parallels with Christian apocalypticism can be striking. The Matumbi and Ngindo who experienced German colonial rule in East Africa thought of it as a climactic evil brought by such powerful sorcery that only world renewal could counteract it. Drawing on their own concepts of temporal corruption and periodic reformation, and following their previous experience of anti-sorcery cults, they readily gave their support to the ‘killer and hater’ of witches, the prophet and healer Kinjikitile Ngwale, who led them into the Maji Maji rebellion of 1905-6.[8] More suggestive are instances of millenarianism in religious movements based on syncretism with missionary Christianity or its reinterpretation—as in those occurring among the peoples of south and central Africa. The cult of the Congolese prophet-messiah Simon Kimbangu, which flourished in the early 1920s, was ‘largely concerned with the detection of witches’. But in doctrinal terms it was compatible with Protestant Christianity (Kimbangu took on a Christ-role) and, in a modern equivalent of Reformation iconoclasm, it also led to the burning of traditional religious objects like idols and fetishes.’ In a comparable case from North America, Tcnskwatawa, the Shawnee prophet who emerged in 1805, proclaimed millenarian revelations of a kind that could have originated in missionary activity and chose witches as a principal target of his warnings (some were actually burnt by his followers).[10]

The dangers of extrapolating from the experiences of remote cultures are now too familiar to need any emphasis. But in this instance the remoteness can easily be exaggerated. African anti-sorcery cults have repeatedly shown evidence of Christian principles at work, even to the extent of promising the return of a saviour from the

Sociology of African Witch-Cleansing Cults’, in Mary Douglas (ed.), *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusa lions (l^ontion,* 1970), 129-39.

[7] L. P. Mair, ‘Independent Religious Movements in Three Continents’, *Comparative Stud. Society and Hist.* 1 (19S8-9), 113; cf. ead., ‘Witchcraft as a Problem in the Study of Religion’, *Cahiers d'etudcs africaines, 15,4(* 963—4), 347: ‘The final elimination of witches is often among the promises made to their followers by the prophets of millenarian religions.’ In contrast, Bryan Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium, passim,* esp. 22-6, 53-69, draws a distinction between ‘magical’ (or ‘thaumaturgical’) and ‘millennialist’ (or ‘revolutionary’) responses in religious movements. He does not, however, deny that the elimination of witches can feature in both. On anti-sorcery cults in particular, see 84-91.

[8] Adas, *Prophets of Rebellion,* 102-5.

[9] Mair, ‘Independent Religious Movements’, 115; Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium,* 367-73; id., *The Noble Savages: The Primitive Origins of Charisma and its Contemporary Survival* (London, 1975), 70-82, see also 58-69 (case of William Wade Harris); Georges Balandier, *The Sociology of Black Africa: Social Dynamics in Central Africa,* trans. Douglas Garman (London, 1970), 410-72

[10] Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium,* 229-36; id., *Noble Savages,* 53.

dead once society was morally purified and cleansed of its witches.[11] Bryan Wilson has written: 'The association of thaumaturgical demands with hopes for some type of new dispensation have appeared in several of these anti-sorcery movements, but this association is to be expected, given the welter of Christian ideologies circulating in Central Africa.'[12] Moreover, the religious reform of early modern Europe has also been depicted as a campaign by 'internal missionaries' to substitute some rather fundamental elements of Christian belief for a popular religiosity in which thaumaturgy—what Wilson calls 'the magical amendment of nature'—bulked large. Whatever historians make of this, it was certainly the way many reformers saw their task at the time.[13] A general congruence between the two cultural settings may therefore be suggested, with the modern examples confirming the tendency for societies that believe in witchcraft and are subject to fierce Christian evangelizing to link the eradication of the one with the revelations and promises of the other. This is not done at the dictates of some social mechanism functioning blindly to 'displace anxiety' and 'relieve accumulating tension'. It is the result of an intrinsic connection between acquiring the blessings of the good life and removing the obstacles which presently stand in its way.

What was different about the earlier, European case, of course, was that the 'missionaries' brought their own thaumaturgical ideals with them in the form of a claimed special dispensation to 'cure' society by attacking evil and bringing relief from its practitioners. As we have seen, they also thought predominantly in apocalyptic, not millenarian terms. Their twentieth-century colonial counterparts could not take either sorcery' or anti-sorcery seriously, and disapproved of the native prophets and messiahs who did. All the same, we might still ask of witch-prosecuting Europe the sort of questions that have been asked of witch-cleansing Africa. Did the onset of systematic prosecutions, as distinct from the perennial but piecemeal and private counter-witchcraft of tradition, reflect a sense of 'moral renewal' and a hoped-for final purging of early modern society—if not for the ideal world of the millennium, then in preparation for an eternal severance from sin? Could individual episodes of accusation and prosecution have been exacerbated (as Lamont suggested in the case of Matthew Hopkins) by local apocalyptic expectations and the desire for a world free from evil? Were torture and trial, as well as witch-finding itself, ordeals that initiates might survive or succumb to, leaving their neighbours to enjoy a sorcery-free future? Or were they a kind of ordeal in which their accusers and judges proved their freedom from contamination as surrogates of the social conscience?

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[11] A. I. Richards, 'A Modern Movement of Witchfinders', *Africa*, 8 (1935), 448-61; Max G. Manvick, 'Another Modern Anti-Witchcraft Movement in East Central Africa', *Africa,* 20 (1950), 101, 110-12; Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium,* 85; Mair, 'Witchcraft as a Problem in the Study of Religion', 347-8. For a modern study, illustrating the blending of images from biblical apocalyptic with indigenous beliefs and rituals, see Fields, *Revival and Rebellion,* 163-92.

[12] Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium,* 89.

u Ibid. 70; Jean Delumcau, *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire: A New View of the Counter-Reformation,* trans. J. Moiscr (London, 1977), 175-202; and see below, Ch. 34.

Were they perhaps rituals of purification and separation, in which pre-millennial or pre-apocalyptic rules of contagion and its avoidance were enforced by the community with the sanction of the law? In these and other ways, it is at least plausible that ‘visions of the end’ could have impinged on the actual business of apprehending and punishing witches.

* * *

Answers to these questions will have to await detailed understanding of the moral climate of individual witch trials—an aspect of their aetiology that has hitherto been neglected in favour of the more concrete mechanisms governing the functioning of the societies in which they occur. It is not difficult to find examples of popular eschatological fervour, even outside the context of relatively well-orchestrated millenarianism. Crouzet writes of‘unc conjoncture mcntale eschatologique’ affecting all levels of French society in the sixteenth century.[14] Visions and predictions generated a stream of popular prophetism in the United Provinces deep into the eighteenth century, for the most part animated by eschatological beliefs.[15] That individual years—like 1583 or 1666—might witness the apocalypse, or that isolated wonders—like the total eclipse of the sun predicted for 29 March 1652—signified its coming were ideas that were accessible to all English social groups.[16] They had, said the Earl of Clarendon haughtily, ‘a strange operation upon vulgar minds’.[17] Early modern history was punctuated by collective fears and panics clustering round decisive dates, startling events, and messianic persons. It was reported that eclipses might draw people from their houses in the belief‘that the world was ending and the day of judgement had come’.[18] We know from the cases of the vintner Hans Kiel of Gerlingen in Wiirttemberg and John Mason the rector of Water Stratford in Buckinghamshire that men and women could plausibly claim to have met angels or seen visions of Christ who threatened apocalyptic punishment for the world’s sins.[19]

It would be unlikely if the great wave of preaching on this theme did not have some effect in heightening animosity towards witches and encouraging the idea that their elimination was a kind of collective social penance.[20] English millenarians were said to teach that promoting the kingdom of Christ meant that ‘all the ungodly must be killed.’[21] Robert Muchembled suggests that in Flanders and Artois, ‘the frenzy

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“ Crouzet, *Guerriers de Dieu,* i. 93.

IS Willem Frijhoff, Prophetic cl societc dans les Provinccs-Unies aux xvn* el XVIII* siecles*, in Dupont-Bouchat *et al., Prophetes et sorciersdans les Pays-Bas,* 263-362; *cf. Delumeau La Pear,* 221-2.

“ Stone, ‘Shakespeare and the Sad Augurs’, 457-79; David Brady, ‘1666: The Yar of the Beast¹, *Bull. John Rylands Library,* 61 (1978-9), 314-36; Bernard Capp, ‘The Fifth Monarchists and Popular Millenarianism’, in J. F. McGregor and B Reay (eds.), *Radical Religion in the English Revolution* (London, 1984), \16-T, *id., Astrology and the Popular Press: English Almanacs 1500-1800 (London* 1979) 79-80 288.

[17] Cited Brady,‘1666’, 330. [11] *VMemma,Histoire generate* bk 3 61-2

” David Warren SabwnP^rw *the Blood: Popular and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge 1984), 61-93; cf Martin Scharfe, ‘Wunder und Wunderglaube im Protestantischen Wurttemberg , *Blatter fur wurttembergischeKtrchengesehichte,* 68/9 (1968-9), 190-206; Christopher Hill, *Purhanism and Revolution* (London, 1958), 323-36.

[20] The link was suggested by Peuckert, *Die Grosse Wende*, 121-30

n " **Ephraim Pagitt,** Here,i0gra^: Or' a *Option of the heretickes and sectaries of these latter times* (London, 1645), 120.

shown by those who persecuted witches permitted them to escape fear and prepare for the coming of the end of time.'[22] Even in Amsterdam the church council denounced sorcerers in 1597 as promoters of 'the kingdom of the devil and the Roman Antichrist'.[23] Following the processions of the 'white penitents' in 1583-4, the Ardennes and Champagne became 'filled with witches', according to one contemporary, prompting Crouzet to speculate whether popular violence against them was an opportunity for the community 'to tell God mystically about its improvement and prepare itself for the final confrontation'.[24] During the executions at Ellingen in Franconia in 1590 a cleric gave a sermon on the imminence of the end of the world and said that the Antichrist had recently been born in Babylon.[25] Throughout Germany, eschatology helped to explain the material chaos that witches were often blamed for, even if witch-trials brought more instant relief than waiting for Christ's return.[26] And in Salem in September 1692, when the witchcraft trials and executions in which he had a crucial role 'were reaching a crescendo, and the proponents of the witch-hunt seemed in the ascendancy', Samuel Parris preached that the 'lamb' and the 'dragon' of Revelation were dividing the world into opposed factions (without 'neuters'), prior to an apocalyptic encounter.[27]

What it is not yet possible to do is to trace the influence of eschatology, whether judicial, clerical, or lay, on the course and style of specific episodes of witchcraft prosecution. This is despite the fact that, in one theoretical respect at least, witches were unmistakably the bearers of an eschatological sign—the mark of the Beast (Revelation 13: 16). It was not universal for witchcraft theorists to identify the stigmata printed by the devil on the bodies of his human servants with those of the Antichrist, but the association was made so frequently that its currency among the learned cannot be doubted. And since the devil's mark was often a prominent demonological ingredient in trial investigations and confessions it may be supposed that, in this context too, it could acquire eschatological overtones. Among the authors who made the

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[u] Robert Muchemblcd, 'Witchcraft, Popular Culture, and Christianity in the Sixteenth Century with Emphasis upon Flanders and Artois', in R. R. Forster and P. M. Ranum (eds. and trans.), *Ritual, Religion and the Sacred (London,* 1982), 221-2 [orig. pub. as 'Sorcellerie, culture populaire et christianisme au xvi* siècle principalement en Flandre et en Artois', z/rtwa/n *E. S.* C., 28 (1973), 264-84).

[21] A. T. van Deursen, *Plain Lives in a Goldem Age: Popular Culture, Religion and Society in Seventeenth-Century Holland,* trans. Maarten Ultee (Cambridge, 1991), 250.

[24] Crouzet, *Guerriers de Dieu,* ii. 340—1, see esp. the important n. 248. Crouzet also suggests that, between 1580 and 1600, royal justice in France was faced, in the matter of witchcraft, by eschatological tension on the part of both ordinary people and the local justices. Alfred Soman, *Sorcellerie et justice criminelle: Le Parlement de Paris* (n.p., 1992), essay xiv, 23, also mentions apocalyptic preaching as an ingredient in the witchcraft scares in Champagne-Ardcnnes in the 1580s.

[21] *Michic\ Kunze, Highroad to the Stake: A* *Tale*o/JH/rArra/?, trans. William E.Yuill (London, 1987), 133, see also 113,166-70,208-11.

[24] Hartmut Lehmann, 'The Persecution of Witches as Restoration of Order: The Case of Germany', *Central European Hist.* 21 (1988), 114-17.

[27] Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (London, 1974), 174-5; the authors also speak of Parris's 'cosmic translation' of Salem's history into 'a universal drama in which Christ and Satan, Heaven and Hell, struggled for supremacy' (p. 177). For apocalypticism among the Salem judges, see Lc Roy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers* (4 vols.; Washington, 1946-54), iii. 107-8,134-7.

link were Francisco Torrcblanca, Pierre Crcspet, Sebastien Michaelis (both drawing on Hippolytus), Jude Scrclicr, and Henri Boguet. Michaelis, for example, wrote that Revelation showed ‘that at the end of the world there shall be a certaine kind of people, who shall beare upon them the signe and character of the beast’, adding that this was ‘litterally to bee understood’ of witches.[28] Boguet assumed that the mark searched for in the case of Fran^oise Secrctain was the Antichrist’s, who, like all slave-masters, marked his own so that he could recognize them.[2]’ Later we shall find the same doctrines in the views of a prominent medical expert consulted in another actual case.[30]

The theological and legal expertise on stigmata also indicates that witches could have been seen as acting as agents of the Antichrist not merely in the pages of textbooks but when their bodies were searched for physical signs of guilt. One authority was the French Jesuit Théophile Raynaud, whose discussion of witchcraft forms a bulky section of his *De stigmatismo* (1647).[31] Another was Petrus Ostermann, the Cologne jurist who was later a member of the Privy Council of the Elector of Mainz and an Aulic Counsellor of the Empire. Ostermann is interesting as yet another Catholic intellectual who felt keenly that he was living in the last times; he complained to his dedicatee (the Archbishop of Cologne) that in ‘the epilogue to an ageing world *(settescenlis mitnili epilogo)'* Europe was being afflicted by raging civil wars, divisive sectarianism, and ‘horrible witchcrafts *(sortilegiis abominabilibus)'.* Again, the treatment of the last of these is very substantial and dominates the treatise; he appeals to a full range of demonological authorities and the usual Antichrist writings. The devil ‘signs’ his servants (Ostermann suggests) in mockery of the holy sacraments, feudal investiture, and royal *fraternitas.* In particular, he wishes to erase the stigmata of baptism and substitute a sign of his own. The element of antichristianism adds depth to the travesty and confirms its currency in the age of history’s senility.[32]

In the absence of evidence of links between local eschatology and specific witch trials, we can also resort to the literature of demonology for generalized depictions of witch-cleansing as a prescription for the last times. Any writer who accounted for the flourishing of witchcraft in eschatological terms was capable, at least in principle, of inviting godly magistrates to see its eradication in the same light. An added incentive to do this was the idea that the Antichrist was necessarily an antagonist of the political forms and institutions, just as much as any of the other manifestations, of Christian truth and order. As Robert Rollock wrote: ‘He shall oppone [n?J him against all powers and magistrates and against all things, that carries the name of a magistrate, whether they be Princes, or, Emperors on the earth, or, in Heaven, God and his

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” Michaelis, *Discourse of spirits,* 133; cf. id., *Admirable historic,* 378; Torrcblanca, *Daemonologia,* 203; Crcspet, *Deux Litres,* fo. 244’; *Setclicr, L’Antidemon historial,* 548-9.

” Boguet, *Examen of Witches, 128.* [50] See below, Ch. 28.

’• Théophile Raynaud, *De stigmatismo sacro et profano, divino, humano, daemoniaco* (Lyons, 1654), 349-453; on the Antichrist, see esp. 344-6,353 (the 1647 edn. appeared at Grenoble)

" Ostermann, *Commentarius iuridicus,* Dedication, 16-21, 70 (Antichrist), 21-102 (witch’s mark). The point was partially conceded by Ostermann’s opponent on the subject of stigmata, Jordanaeus, *Disputatio brevis et categorica deproba stigmatica*^ 55.

Christ, and from this opposition he is called an adversary.'[33] Conversely, the highest aim of all temporal power was, a Norfolk parson wrote in a dedication to Charles I, 'to maintaine the glory of Christ, and so consequently to confound Antichrist'.[34] Thus the godly ruler became a natural focus for the hope that the ruin of the Antichrist could be hastened, if not actually achieved, by human policy—within which the removal of magic and witchcraft from society had an obvious importance. This was a hope which could easily become a real expectation whenever rulership was seen in yet more heightened eschatological terms as some form of 'last world empire', a vision of authority that continued to generate political messianism throughout the age of witch prosecutions.

This is not quite what happened in the case of the English divine Thomas Cooper but his *The mystery of witch-craft* (1617) is still a good example of the mentality of witch-cleansing at work. Cooper dedicated it to the Mayor and Corporation of Chester and the JPs of the County Palatine, to whose patronage he owed his first livings. Over the years he had become an expert on witchcraft in Cheshire and the local magistrates evidently looked to him for guidance in specific cases. But Cooper had other reasons than politeness or pedagogy for the dedication. Set firmly in the mainstream of English apocalyptic thought, his treatise opens by arguing that the 'special providences' of the last times ought to be matched by correspondingly enriched faith. Satanism and devilry have been finally and fully exposed by the power of the gospel, offering the godly the chance of unprecedented spiritual betterment and enabling the magistrate 'to take such course therein, as may best serve to the demolishing of the Kingdome of Anti-christ'. Instead, men and women are heedless of the word and stubborn in sin—the familiar syndrome of the last age. In their misfortunes they continue to resort to the blessers, healers, and 'good' witches of the English countryside. Cooper calls this a doting on 'the fitches and onions, yea the garbidge and very deepenesse of Antichrist', and his chief complaint is that it is covert Catholicism; as usual he allows no distinction between benevolent and malevolent magic—all of it is witchcraft and all of it is demonic.

Confronting this resurgent antichristianism are the twin ordinances of a godly society—ministry and magistracy. Cooper saw both his pastorate and his demonology in a tradition stemming from Elizabethans like Perkins, Gifford, and John Northbrooke; 'Shall I not', he wrote, 'also bring my fagot to the burning of these Witches.' The model magistrate was James I, not exactly a 'last world emperor' (we might think) but one who, like a witness 'in these declining daies', had denounced the Antichrist with his pen, unmasked the Antichrist's involvement in witchcraft, and made laws to cleanse England of both. Cooper had a lively image of society in the last days besieged on all sides by demonism. Every assizes, he complained, resounded with the arraignment and conviction of notorious witches. But he wrote just as vividly of the purgative force of word and sword when jointly wielded with apocalyptic urgency:

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[33] Rollock, *Lectures upon ... Thessalonians,* 60-1; cf. Powell, *Disputationum theologicarum,* 94; Jean Morel, *De ecclesia ab Antichristo per eius excidium liberanda* (London, 1589).

[34] Edmund Gurnay, *The demonstration of Antichrist* (London, 1631), sig. A2–*.

> Seeing now the sword of the Magistrate is seasonably brandished against these offenders:... Ought not the Word to encourage the Sword to this glorious worke of detecting and confounding the Kingdome of darknesse, which especially prevailes by these devilfish charmes... Surely the Justice of GOD is admirable herein to bee laid to heart of all those that doe hate the Whore, and desire her destruction, that so they may lift up their heads because their salvation draweth neere; in that they may discerne in this glasse of his providence, the confusion of Antichrists approachings?[5]

The combination in Cooper of hostility to popular magic, hatred of Rome, and reliance on the godly magistrate produced a typical piece of eschatology directed at getting rid of witches; one might have found it at any point between the Elizabethan church settlement and the outbreak of the civil wars. Richard Farnworth's *Witchcraft cast out from the religious seed and Israel of God* (1655) lacks the Erastian ingredient, and its insistent use of the imagery of light and dark places it firmly in the sectarian polemics of the 1650s. Yet despite the Quaker (and Ranter) tendency to internalize eschatology as a guide to the final episodes of a history of the spirit, Farnworth is still preoccupied with magic and witchcraft as concrete manifestations of the last times. He attacks Nicholas Grctton, the 'wise man' of Lichfield, by name and gives examples of the most popular demands made of professional wizards by their customers. For both experts and clients is reserved an apocalypse of just deserts. Farnworth makes no appeal to the magistrate but his language is that of classic witch-cleansing:

> Howl all Witches, the fire and the lake is prepared for you, and all in your craft, Howl, vengence upon you all that are Wizards, the fire and the lake is for you all, and wo to all that take counsel at you, and al Wizards;... the sword is drawn, the fire burns, you are all compassed, and the chain is upon your necks, reserved for the judgement of the great day: and for the burning fire, that burneth for ever and ever.[36]

These are, of course, promises of simple retribution, but they also imply purgation and the destruction of contaminants. The suggestion of a dispensation that will finally cauterize society's moral wounds captures rather well the mood in which actual witch trials could have been undertaken, as well as reflecting the general hopes of Interregnum eschatology.

These examples of Protestant opinion are matched by comparably forceful statements from Catholic demonology. Writing, like Farnworth, in the wake of religious war, Pierre Node illustrates the same blend of moral outrage and conceptual (and lin-

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” Cooper, *Mystery of witch-craft.* 16-24, all other quotations 1-8. On ministry and magistracy in an apocalyptic context, cf. Thomas Rogers, *The general session, conteining an apologie ofthe doctrine concerning the ende of this world, and seconde camming of Christ* (London, 1581), 72-4 (Rogers also trans a work by Sheltco a Geveren with a similar title); Samuel Crossman, *A sermon preached in Christs Church Bristol at the Assizes for that city and county* (London, 1676), 'Epistle Dedicatory'.

“ *[RichzrdFimworth], Witchcraft cast putfrom the religious seed'and Israel of God And the black art, or, mcromancery, tnchantmenls. sorcerers, wizards, lying divination, conjuration, and witchcraft discovered, with the ground, fruits, and effects thereof (London,* 1655), 12-13, see also 3,7,10.

guistic) aggression. But like Cooper his principal appeal is to the agency of secular justice, and witches, magicians, and heretics mingle indistinguishably among those whom he blames for bringing France to the brink of the apocalypse. A central argument of his *Declamation contre l'erreur execrable des malejiciers. sorciers, enchanteurs, magiciens, devins, et semblables observateurs des superstitions* (1578) is that these criminals represent the fulfilment of individual Pauline and Johannine prophecies. Of the two beasts of Revelation 13, one is the Antichrist, 'prince of magic', and the other is magic itself, its two horns signifying magicians and witches, 'supreme servants and leading vassals of the Antichrist'.[37] Together with Huguenots and a whole number of other moral delinquents they have produced a national crisis; by arms or charms the state itself is threatened. It follows that France should be purged (Node uses the verb *repurger)* by an authority acting not merely according to the conventional dictates of Romans 13 but in the spirit of Revelation 19—where judgement is given against the Whore, where the word and the sword act righteously together to smite and slay, and where the forces of the Beast are routed in bloody slaughter. Node also demanded ordinary Old Testament judicial rigour, together with the use of the Inquisition, but the idea of apocalyptic carnage evidently had a special appeal for him. He even goes so far as to advocate the liquidation of witches by a general public massacre:

> if there is no other remedy for this misfortune, it would in truth be better (provided the authority of the prince allowed it) to make a glorious witch-killing *(Magophonie)* of them ... that is to say, a day of celebration and festival when all the magicians, witches and enchanters of his country would be put to death.[3*]

Node suggests as a precedent the blood-letting of the Persian Emperor Darius, but it is impossible not to link this particular version of witch-cleansing with the eschatological 'final solution' of Revelation, and to interpret it as the demonological equivalent of the St Bartholomew massacre of 1572. After all, at the end of his 'Advertissement au lecteur', Node added a sonnet casting Henri III not merely as an emperor-king but specifically as the French Darius.

Early in the next century French Catholics renewed Node's call for the cleansing of French witchcraft by a royal campaign inspired by apocalyptic and imperial goals. Between 1618 and 1625 Jean Le Normant published a series of pamphlets, each dedicated to Louis XIII, in which demonology and eschatology meet in an apocalyptic vision of monarchy. In *Le Combat de David contre Goliath* the tasks of the French king are likened to those of the young David, who in slaying the wolf and the lion qualified himself for the struggle with Goliath and the Philistines. Le Normant believes that the 'Goliath' of early seventeenth-century France is the devil, supported by Protestants, magicians, and witches. But Louis too has prepared himself for the ultimate combat by twice exercising royal justice, first through the *parlement of* Aix-en-Provence when it condemned Louis Gaufridy in 1611, and then through *the parlement*

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[n] Node, *Declamation,* 11.

>• Ibid. 58, see also 54: '... nature abhorrentc leurs prodigieus efleetz, poussc les coeurs des fidelles a requerir ccux-la estre massacrez*.

of Paris in its *arret* concerning the courtier-magician Concino Concini. It only remains for him to bring the full force of the magistracy to bear on magic and witchcraft throughout France. Following the completion of these Davidic labours, Louis will be elevated by the Holy Spirit above all other kings as monarch of the world. But on the point of universal power he will renounce it in favour of its only true wielder—Christ. In two further tracts, *De I'exorcisme* and *De la fin du monde,* Lc Normant explains that this will take place on the Mount of Olives and lead to the transferral to Jerusalem of the Holy See. Louis himself will remain as the greatest of Christ's lieutenants with the title of 'Grand Constable of France'. Just as Christ repaired the fault of Adam, so Louis will repair Caesar's failure to recognize Christ as King of Judaea; just as the redeemer of the world was of the race of David, so its preserver will be of the race of Saint Louis.[39]

This is, of course, a seventeenth-century version of the idea of the 'Emperor of the Last Days', who prepares for the Second Coming by taking Christendom to the brink of world triumph and then handing it over to direct rule by God. It held a commanding position throughout medieval eschatology but retained its vitality in early modern Europe.[40] It had a currency in French political thought, as shown, for instance, by its adoption by Gabriel de Saconay;[41] and it was evidently familiar to witchcraft authors. Pierre de Lancre found references to a French last world emperor in both Pedro de Valderrama and Strozzi Cicogna. 'To this', he noted, 'others have added that a King of France, after having defeated all the peoples and nations of the earth, particularly the Spaniards, will close and put an end to the world, pending the day of judgement.'[42] This was a kind of political salvationism which blended well with the hopes of witchcraft prosecutors, for it offered the prospect of the conclusive purification of a corrupt society by messianic authority. In the local conditions of early modern Europe it reproduced (at least at the level of texts) some of the typical features of the witch-cleansing cult.

* * *

Even as Le Normant was writing his tracts, Jean Boucher, theologian, former militant *ligueur,* and now, in exile, archdeacon and canon of Tournai cathedral, was publishing perhaps the grandest and most exhaustive exposition these ideas were ever given—his *Couronne mystique* of 1624. This very ample quarto is, in fact, an omnibus of virtually all the themes which I have been considering since first broaching the question of a historical dimension to witchcraft beliefs; and their very adjacency in Boucher's dense but coherent exposition is an indication in itself of, so to speak, an eschatological *Zusammenhang.* His eventual proposal (in book V) is the creation in Western Europe of a new military order based on a chivalric code of the purest Counter-Reformation zeal. The inspiration for this sacred militia *(milice sacree)* is to come from Catholic kings, princes, and knights everywhere, but especially from a holy alliance between Louis XIII and Philip IV of Spain. Its principal aim is to crush the Turks but it will also annihilate the Church's other enemies in a final and decisive moral *reconipiista* directed against all forms of impiety. Like the crusaders of old it will bear an insignia of great symbolic potency, in this case the circular form produced by a single strand coiled in an uninterrupted triple helix. Boucher believed that this 'mystical crown' encapsulated in symbolism all the truths of the Catholic faith and of divine monarchy, the twin foundations of his grand design for Europe. He also claimed that its shape and construction transcended the laws of logic, natural philosophy, and mathematics and that this gave it miracle-working properties, besides proving its divine origin. Lastly, and (in the present context) of most significance, he claimed that it was emblematically contrary to the mark of the 'Beast' and that this made it uniquely appropriate as the device of those engaged in eschatological warfare.[45]

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[39] Jean Lc Normant, *Le Combat de David contre Goliath au roy tres-Chrestien Louis le juste* (n.p., 1618), *passim-,* for the imperial themes, see p. 6; id., *De l'exorcisme,* 13-17,18-19,26,44-7; id., *Delafindu monde,* 13-14.

[40] For a convenient summary of the myth of the 'Emperor of the Last Days', see Reeves, 'History and Eschatology', 102; fuller account in cad., *Injluence of Prophecy,* 306-19 (Last Emperor), 320-31 (second Charlemagne). The dissemination of the idea of world rule in early modern Europc'is dealt with by Frances A. Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1975), 1-26, 38-47, 121-6,144-5.

[41] Gabriel de Saconay, *De La Providence de Dieu sur les roys de France Ires chrestieru, par la quelle sa saincte religion Catholique ne defaudra en leur Royaume* (Lyons, 1568), 18.

[42] De Lancrc, *L 'Incredulity* 170.

Boucher prepared the ground for his final call to arms, first by arguing that the pursuit of piety was the end of all political engagements and then by depicting a Europe besieged by appalling sins and errors (books I and II). Religious good must be the overriding criterion of political forms inspired by God, and its fortunes at the hands of rulers had always been the basis of his judgements on their affairs. Sacerdotality and royalty were twin aspects of the social and moral order but the first had precedence over the second and kings must thus subordinate their policies to the needs of the Papacy, like children meeting filial obligations. It followed that the confounding of heresy, atheism, and Islam was always a political priority. In the present age it was a compelling necessity, for impiety had reached its final maturity in the consummate errors of Protestants. Boucher is, of course, fulsome in his denunciation of their beliefs and the way they tend towards total atheism. But he also claims that heresy has spawned the worst impiety of all—witchcraft—at which point his treatise is turned without incongruity into a demonology.

We are now on familiar ground. Witchcraft is the sixth and sovereign degree of atheism (after hypocrisy, temporizing, inconstancy, vice, and rejection of an afterlife of divine judgements) and the Antichrist is therefore not merely the greatest atheist but the greatest witch and magician. In every age antichristian heresy and magic have flourished together, exactly paralleling each other in beliefs and rituals. Modern Lutheranism and Calvinism negate and subvert the true religion, just as it is parodied and inverted at sabbats. Protestant nations are overrun with witches, ghosts, and sprites, with Germany outdoing the others in impieties stretching from the

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[45] Boucher, *Couronne mystique,* 819-954, esp. 846-51.

Lutherans and Paracelsians to the Rosicrucians. This is the backbone of an argument which Boucher defends with all the usual demonological apparatus—historical, scriptural, and juridical. In terms of bulk and impact it completely overshadows what he has to say about the errors of the Turks.[44]

Next, the treatise enters an eschatological phase (book III). The last turning-point in history is imminent and like the others it is presaged with warning signs and wonders. Heresy and witchcraft have reached such a pitch that the world is full to overflowing *(comblé)* with impiety. At this point, Boucher's language becomes that of the witch-cleanser. He cites Isaiah 27:1 ('In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent ... and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea') and appeals for the extinguishing of evil in the last days. He talks of God awakening men to action with trumpets and inviting them to co-operate in the bloody judgements depicted by the Angel of the Apocalypse in Revelation 19: 17-21. The imagery of fowls gorging on the flesh of the defeated is applied to the deeds of men in helping to destroy the Antichrist and Boucher draws lessons from the urgency of the chase: 'as direct natural motion nears its completion, it becomes stronger and more violent, just as the hound redoubles its pace as it gets closer to its quarry.'[45] Boucher speaks of being on the brink of the church's liberation, 'by the downfall of impiety, the conversion of unbelievers, the extermination of those who have feasted on us'. He also talks of the 'extermination' of witches, citing Micah 5:12 ('And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand').[46] In his vision, witch-hunting becomes a kind of holy war, a crusade led by godly princes and Christian knights, and its ultimate significance stems from a view of what these agencies of authority ought to be doing to speed the eschaton.

Boucher went on to develop his argument that it was the 'Most-Christian' kings of France and Spain in particular who should undertake this task (book IV). And there is much else in his book to suggest a distinctive politics of witch-prosecuting, as well as a view of its place in the historical process. This, however, is a topic we must, for the moment, postpone. In the mean time, *Couronne mystique* may stand as a particularly vivid illustration of the mentality of witch-cleansing. Like the other texts I have cited it does not, of course, tell us if its call to action was translated into actual witch trials. But all of them reveal something of the values and attitudes that circulated in societies where witch trials were held and their contribution to the moral climate which surrounded them may be inferred, if it cannot be demonstrated. If, however, it is influence on behaviour that matters, then we may get nearer to the social implications of eschatological demonology if we turn away from witchcraft for a while and concentrate on the allied phenomenon of demonic possession. The step is not a big one; possession's incidence, like that of witchcraft, was thought to be relative to the play of historical forces, and its removal by exorcism had evidently purgative overtones. Its potential as a vehicle for historical meanings was thus equally developed. But in order to explore these we need to make a fresh start.

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[44] Boucher, *Couronne mystique,* 537-602.

[45] Ibid. 615.

[46] Ibid. 618,652-3.

26

Understanding Possession

> And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out.
>
> (Matthew 10:1)

> That there were many Daemoniaques in the Primitive Church, and few Mad-men, and other such singular diseases; whereas in these times we hear of, and see many Mad-men, and few Daemoniaques, proceeds not from the change of Nature; but of names.
>
> (Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan)*

POSSESSION by devils is a familiar enough aspect of the history of the body in early modern Europe. Yet trying to understand it raises again many of the problems of interpretation with which this book has been concerned. The known examples suggest that it was a general phenomenon that intensified as demonism and witchcraft themselves grew to be major preoccupations. Possession certainly became much more common in northern Germany in this period, and even epidemic after about 1560, as Protestant divines sought to convince the nation of its accumulating sins (it appears to have been less prevalent in Catholic Germany). In fact, the demand for exorcism became so great that the greed and quackery of some exorcists had to be added to the list.[1] The countryside *Beschwiirer* also drew fire from all the leading Lutheran authorities on demonology and magic, from Conrad Platz and Hermann Hamclmann in the 1560s and 1570s to Bernhard Albrecht, Johann Ellinger, and Hermann Samson in the 1620s.[2] In Italy the popularity of cxorcistic remedies for diseases thought to result from *malejicium* or possession can be inferred both from the Church's concern at irregularities in the use of exorcisms by parish clergy and from the contents of exorcism manuals like those published by the great Italian authority on the subject, Girolamo Menghi? At the turn of the sixteenth century there was a

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[1] H. C. Erik Midelfort, 'Sin, Melancholy, Obsession: Insanity and Culture in Sixteenth-Century Germany*, in Kaplan (cd.), *Undemanding Popular Culture,* 114-15,134-42; id., 'The Devil and the *German* People: Reflections on the Popularity of Demon Possession in Sixteenth-Century Germany', in Steven Ozment (cd.), *Religion and Culture in the Renaissance and Reformation* (Kirksville, Mo., 1989), 107, 118; Janssen, *History of the German People,* xii. 327—38. For possession and exorcism in Augsburg in the 1560s and 1570s, sec Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early* Af0</frn£i/ro^ (London, 1994), 171-98.

[2] See esp. Hermann Hamelmann, *Fine Predigt zu Gundersheim* ... JKaZrr *die Beschwerer, Wicker, Christallenkucher, Zeuberer, Nachweiser, undSeegner(n.^.* [Wolfenbüttel?], 1572); Ellinger, *Hexen Coppel,* 40-4.

> Mar>- R. O'Neil, *'Sacerdole owero slrione:* Ecclesiastical and Superstitious Remedies in Sixteenth-Century Italy', in Kaplan (ed.), *Understanding Popular Culture,* 53-83; David Gentilcore, *From Bishop to*

‘Ministry of Exorcists’ in Rome.[4] In 1603 the Burgundian witch-trial judge Henri Boguet noted that accusations made by demoniacs against witches were a daily occurrence in his town of St-Claude.[5] The divine George Gifford said that in Essex in the 1590s, ‘daylie it is scene, that the devill is driven out of some possessed, that where he did vexe and torment men in their bodies, and in their cattle, they have rcmedic against him.’[6] Exorcists, said another Englishman in 1612, ‘have many favourers in the world”. In the New World too, as late as 1692-3, at least forty-eight fresh cases and ten old ones were diagnosed in Massachusetts.[8]

Moreover, when we catch glimpses of the terms in which ordinary men and women accounted for their own various afflictions, as we do in the case notes of the English astrological physician Richard Napier, it becomes clear that demoniacal possession could be blamed for a number of everyday disorders and that possessing devils could be seen and felt in ways that were not always dismissed at the time as illusory. The implication is that, quite apart from the numerous examples which were narrated in tracts and pamphlets, or came to the attention of the authorities because they were occasions of scandal, a considerable hinterland of possession behaviour lies lost to historical view in the lives of those who, all over Western Europe, resorted to local exorcists or to healers and magicians like Napier.’ Even at the time, Sir Thomas Browne was arguing that many possession cases were never properly recognized because they were assumed to be cases of bewitchment.[10] It is not surprising that the seventeenth century has been called ‘the golden age of the demoniac’.”

The literature that arose from the more notorious cases of possession and from the theoretical discussions of academic physicians and writers on demonology, was also very extensive indeed. The very nature of the condition came to be disputed, even at the time, and a variety of alternative causes for its symptoms were offered, ranging from stark madness to outright deceit. It was Browne, too, who allowed that ‘the devil doth really possess some men; the spirit of melancholy others; the spirit of delusion others.’[12] All the same, it cannot be said that the principle that devils might inhabit humans was abandoned by a substantial portion of the literate classes of

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Witch: The System of the Sacred in Early Modem Terra d’Otranto (Manchester, 1992), 107-13. For the same problems in Spain, see Ciruelo, *Treatise,* 265-88.

* Walker and Dickerman, ‘ “A Woman under the Influence” ’, 553 (citing Pierre-Victor Palma Cayet, *Chronologic septenaire).*

[5] Boguet, *Examen of Witches,* 10, see also p. xxxiii.

[6] George Gifford, *A dialogue concerning witches and witchcraftes* (London, 1593), sig. F3^r.

[7] *Mason, Anatomic of sorcerie, ^.* [8] *Arisen, Devil in the Shape of a Woman, 39.*

[9] Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England.* (Cambridge, 1981), 155—6,198—208} cf. Drage, *Daimonomageia,* 39—40. John Bossy suggests that the subject of exorcism and other healing powers ‘lies not on the periphery but somewhere near the centre of a consideration of the role of the Catholic priest in England until, say, 1650’. See his *The English Catholic Community, 157(1-1850* (London, 1975), 266.

[10] Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia epidemica,* in *Works,* iv. 389.

[11] E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland: The Borderlands during the Reformation* (London, 1976), 60.

[12] Browne, *Religio medici,* in *Works,* ii. 44.

Europe, including the medical profession, until beyond the end of the seventeenth century. It was being defended by Newton's successor in the Lucasian chair of mathematics at Cambridge in 1737.[u] Being possessed was undoubtedly an unpleasant and disturbing matter, both as actually experienced and as described in print. But the very notion of demonic possession itself was not, so to speak, conceptually disturbing to many early modern minds. The condition was a regular feature of social life, as it was then perceived, and the concept seems to have fitted without offence into the patterns of thought of both ordinary people and the learned.

This is not the impression one receives from many modern accounts. Committed, in effect, to the view of possession that was ultimately victorious in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these have concentrated on explaining away a form of behaviour that many of those involved took for granted. Easily the most popular solution has been to superimpose the categories of modern psychiatry on to the early modern diagnoses of insanity to produce what may be called a psycho-pathology of possession. Freud himself offered a brief specimen when he suggested that the symptoms of the seventeenth-century Bavarian painter Christoph Haizmann could be traced to a neurosis brought on by the death of his father and his desire to find a demonic surrogate. By opposing and yet complementing divine authority the devil could express in fantasy the classically ambivalent feelings of love and loathing which Haizmann, in common with all children, felt for the father he had lost.[14] Altogether more grandiose was the attempt by the German clinical psychologist T. K. Oesterreich to explain every single example of possession, from whatever culture or age, in terms of the psychic compulsions that produce symptoms of dual personality. Approaches of this kind have a very long pedigree indeed, stretching from the works of nineteenth-century French experts like Jean Esquirol, Louis Calmeil, and Jean-Martin Charcot to those of the historian-psychologists Gregory Zilboorg and Cecile Ernst.[15] A sophisticated version is John Demos's attempt to 'retranslate' the fits of the Massachusetts demoniac Elizabeth Knapp into their 'original psychological content'. Her bleating like a calf, for example, converts into 'a representation of her

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[J] Whiston, zhroun/ *of the daemoniacks, passim.* Whiston believed that it was as reliable a phenomenon in nature as those established by Boyle (elasticity of air) and Newton (gravity); Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton,W.*

[14] Sigmund Freud, 'A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis', in id., *The Complete Psychological Works, ed.* and trans. James Strachcy *et al.* (24 vols.; London, 1966—74), xix. 72-105 (probably a case of obsession, rather than, as Freud treats it, possession). The case is considered by H. C. Enk Midelfort, 'Catholic and Lutheran Reactions to Demon Possession in the late 17th Century: Two Case Histories', *Daphnis,* 15 (1986), 623-48, and Freud's approach to it by Ccrleau, *The Writing of History,* 287-307. For Freud on witchcraft and the origins of hysteria, see Carlo Ginzburg, Afy/Aj, *Emblems, Clues,* trans. John and Anne C.Tedeschi (London, 1990), 150-1.

[15] For an esp. pure 19th-c. example, see the clinical redescription of the possession experiences recounted by a 17th-c. demoniac in Jeanne des Anges, *Saur Jeanne des Anges, passim.* Cf. T. K. Oesterreich, *Possession, Demoniacal and Other,* trans. D. Ibbcrson (London, 1930; New York, 1966), ***passim;*** Thomas S. Szasz, *The Manufacture of Madness: A Comparative study of the Inquisition and the Mental Health Movement* (London, 1971), 96-109; Zilboorg, *Medical Man and the Witch, 65-91; Cecile* Ernst, *Teufelaustreibungen: Die Praxis der Katholischen Kirche im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Berne, 1972), *passim,* with full bibliography.

dependent-receptive wish—the desire to take in sustenance (milk) from a maternal source’.[14] * [16] In fact, there is scarcely an account of witchcraft or possession that does not owe something to the view that demoniacs were, in effect, patients. They were really suffering from acute neurosis or hysteria and those contemporaries who preferred to think that they were possessed by the devil were guilty of making some sort of mistake.

A second solution, built likewise on arguments offered by sceptics at the time, stresses the extent to which possession could be caught up in inter-confessional and inter-jurisdictional controversies. Individual cases were thus liable to become vehicles for propaganda and might be created and managed to serve sectional interests, rather than simply emerging as a reflection of the beliefs and expectations of a religious age. The fact that successful exorcism necessarily demonstrated the bona fides of the exorcist or, more pertinently, his church, while at the same time appearing to be exactly analogous to the magical conjuration of spirits, made it a sensitive issue in Protestant and Catholic Reformation polemic. There was a tendency for Calvinists all over Europe to think of possession as feigned and ritual exorcism as spurious. But in England the testimony of the probably fraudulent Elizabethan demoniac William Sommers became a potential weapon for the Church to use in discrediting the ‘puritanism’ of one Calvinist who did not—John Darrell. In other contexts, possessing devils could become fertile sources for anti-Hugucnot pronouncements when commanded to speak by Catholic priests. In 1598 and 1599 the Frenchwoman Marthe Brossicr of Romorantin, also widely regarded later as having simulated possession, publicly proclaimed that Satan greatly approved of the Edict of Nantes because it gave him an ideal opportunity to contaminate the true faith with tolerated Huguenot heresies. Not surprisingly, her case was thought of very differently by the Catholic opposers of the Edict, notably the Capuchins, and by Henri IV and the *parlement* of Paris—a difference duly reproduced in the opposed verdicts of the theologians and physicians summoned by each side to examine her. It is, of course, important that the apparently peripheral and rather bizarre behaviour associated with possession should turn out to be at the centre of the disputes concerning the religious settlements in both England and France. But the implication, again, is that the authenticity of all possession behaviour and possession beliefs ought to be regarded as radically suspect. The lesson that D. P. Walker, in particular, wishes us to learn from his *Unclean Spirits* is that possession was so corrupted by these intrusions that the reasons given at the time for accepting it as genuine should never be taken at face value.[17]

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[14] John Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (Oxford, 1982), 97-131 Demos solemnly reminds us that ‘Cows ... were supremely significant, as givers of milk, in the rural culture of colonial New England* (444 n. 127).

[17] D. P. Walker, *Unclean Spirits, passim;* cf. id., ‘Demonic Possession used as Propaganda in the later Sixteenth Century’, in *Scienze, credenze occulte, livelli di cultura,* 237-48. On the Brossicr case, sec Mandrou, *Magistrals el sorciers,* 163-79; F. J. Baumgartner, ‘The Catholic Opposition to the Edict of Nantes, 1598-99’, *Bibliotheque d'Humanisme et Renaissance,* 40 (1978), 533-4- Sarah Ferber, ‘The Demonic Possession of Marthe Brossicr, France 1598-1600’, in Charles Zika (cd j *No Gods Except Me Orthodoxy and Religious Practice in Europe 1200-1600* (Melbourne, 1991), 59-83- Walker and Dickerman,

Whatever insights are gained from these two favoured approaches are achieved, therefore, at the expense of the beliefs and actions of those who, operating with sincerely held notions of reality very removed from our own, regarded possession by demons as a real phenomenon. This, in itself, seems a good reason to re-examine what they took it to mean. But, more important, the meanings in question turn out to reflect many of the themes in early modern demonology which I have called ‘historical’. Possession was interpreted as an eschatological sign and exorcism (in the Catholic rite) as an enactment of the promises of Revelation. The stages through which the history of a case passed—from the loosing of devils to possess, to their binding to pronounce and depart—were seen as analogous to those which regulated the course of history in its entirety. Conversely, the experience of demoniacs was seen as a kind of allegory for the condition of human society as it moved into its final phase; in this state, the whole world was (as Pierre Virct put it) ‘possessed by devils’. In Catholic France, the links between possession and eschatology reveal an interest in the Antichrist as vital as in any Protestant context. Some of the individual cases here, as well as the general character of French thought on these subjects, are, therefore, especially helpful in allowing us to understand the one thing that approaches to possession have hitherto neglected—its significance for those who thought it was caused by demons. First of all, however, the question of interpretation needs to be probed a little more deeply. It too has implications for the whole of this study, in terms of both the issues it raises and the possible means for dealing with them.

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No one could sensibly deny the possibility that forms of derangement may have been present in particular examples of early modern possession behaviour. Even so, we might still want to question the assumption that there is something universal in mental disorder lying beyond culturally relative accounts of its causes and symptoms. And since such accounts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries often tied it conceptually to demonism—since demons were said to be the cause of madness and not madness the cause of demons—then the psycho-pathology of early modern possession becomes impossible to discuss apart from the demonology of it. Demoniacal disorders, according to an early Tudor physician, were ‘another kinde of madnesse. And they the which be in this madnes be ever possessed of the devyl, and be develyshe persons.”[8]

‘ “A Woman under the Influence”, 535-54. For comparable evidence from Germany, see Nicolaus Blum, *Ilistorische erzehlung, was sich mil einem ftimehmen Studenten, der vor dem leidigen TeuJJel zwolff Machen besessen gewesen, verlauflen und zu getragen habe, wie und welcher gestalt, derselbe, durch Gottes Gnade, von dem schweren und harten Gefangniiss des TeuJJels, zu Pirn in Meissen, endlich erldset worden* (Leipzig, \^*5), passim,* and Midelfort, ‘Sin, Melancholy,Obsession’, 135-9.

[11] Andrew Boorde, *The breviary ofhelthe* (London, 1547), fos. iiii’-vii^{r}, xiiii’-xv^{r}. On the important place of demonic possession in conceptions of mental disease in England, see Michael MacDonald, ‘Religion, Social Change, and Psychological Healing in England, 1600-1800’, in W. J. Sheils (cd.), *The Church and Healing* (Oxford, 1982), 101-25.1 take the significance of MacDonalds’s work to lie in his reluctance to rcdcscribe early modem mental illness using the categories of modern psychiatry, and his willingness to allow the ordinary language of those involved to define what counted as insanity, and what were its causes and treatment, in particular cultural settings. As he has said elsewhere, ‘social historians must treat

Even where contemporaries did not seek to establish this link, we should still be wary of any apparent affinity with modern clinical diagnoses. Our feelings of familiarity are very likely to be displaced as soon as we realize how differently they conceived of what even some of them regarded as the merely natural sicknesses in the minds or bodies of the possessed. Besides, this is still to neglect those aspects of possession behaviour that may well prove not to have been pathological at all, but perfectly normal in men, women, and children who thought of themselves as actually possessed or were regarded as actually possessed by others. Indeed, any discussion of pathology begs questions about the limits of culturally recognized norms for being possessed. Until we have discovered what these were, it is surely premature to assume that we are dealing with the insane. The official liturgy of the Catholic Church itself insisted that exorcists must know the symptoms ‘that distinguish a possessed person from other individuals who suffer from melancholia or any other illness *(qui vcl atra bile, tel morbo aliquo laboranl)'.* There would not have been any point in making this distinction at all unless men and women in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries could separate behaviours that the historian-psychologists have wanted to conflate.[19]

It is also true that the possibility of fraud and the intrusions of propaganda would need to be taken very seriously should we want to apportion exact responsibility for what was said and done by individual demoniacs or on their behalf. But this too leaves untouched the standing of the overall system of beliefs in terms of which the principle of authentic possession was for a long time tenable. It is not even clear why the presence of propaganda or polemic should somehow have vitiated the genuineness of the behaviour, since it was intrinsic to the very notions of possession and exorcism that a contest for power should take place. The demoniac became a place of direct confrontation between the ambitions of devils and the efficacy (however this was viewed) of religious actions, objects, and forms of words—including, for Catholics, the ritual of the mass itself.[20] Propaganda was in this sense not extraneous to possession but one of its very presuppositions; a successful exorcism necessarily entailed an assertion of authority on the part of the Church. There is also a sense in which both deception and its detection could serve to confirm rather than undermine the cultural system in place and the validity of the actions warranted by it. What could be successfully carried off as a deceit was necessarily as culture-bound as the genuine behaviour being simulated, and it therefore testifies to the latter’s place in a repertoire of culturally acceptable actions. The points at which ordinarily acquired

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the records of actions in the past as complex products of the *interpretation* of behaviour’: id., ‘Insanity and the Realities of History in Early Modern England’, *Psychological Medicine,* 11 (1981), 22. For a similar approach, sec Midclfort, ‘Sin, Melancholy, Obsession’; id., ‘Madness and the Problems of Psychological History in the Sixteenth Century’, *Sixteenth Century J.* 12 (1981), 5-12.

” *Rituale Romanum Pauli V. Pont. Max. iussu editum* (Venice, 1663), 249. For typical lists of symptoms, sec Guazzo, *Compendium malefic arum,* 167-71.

“ For standard accounts of possession in these terms, sec d’Alexis [Berullc], *Traictedes energumenef,* Raffaele Della Torre, *Tractatus de potestate ecclesiae coercendi daemones,* in *Diversi tractatus,* 96; Claude Caron, *Response aux blasphemes d'un ministre de Calvin sacramentaire* (Toumon, 1590), 119.

behaviour shades into artificiality, and insincerity into deception proper, are in any case indefinite and variable, and decisions about where to place cases of possession on this continuum need to be made with subtlety.

As for the controlled tests that were applied to Marthe Brossier, these included 'exorcizing' her with spurious pieces of wood said to come from the true cross and with plain water masquerading as holy. She was even read verses from Virgil instead of those from the proper ritual. Scepticism in her particular case evidently did not depend on any general doubts about the possibility of such tests yielding positive evidence for true possession or the power of genuinely sacred objects to drive out devils. Most Catholic exorcists would have agreed with the Spanish theologian Maldonado who said that genuine demoniacs were those who responded to clerical therapies but not to medical ones.[21] Emphasizing the elements of fabrication in the history of early modern possession does not, therefore, bypass the demonological assumptions of the age. In fact, it presupposes them just as clearly as does discussion of the many cases which, unlike Marthe Brossier's, were not subject to stringent verification at all but were accepted or discounted according to the very much more mundane expectations of village priests and healers or merely those of the neighbours and family of the victims. The point to stress is that judgements about possession, at whatever level, and whatever their outcome, necessarily drew on demonological criteria. We may accordingly be able to give a less reductive account of the subject if we look at it through the eyes of the demonological writers.

Undoubtedly the main obstacle here is the philosophical realism which lies at the heart of the approaches discussed so far. We know that contemporaries constructed the reality they called 'possession' in a number of different ways; it was the product of demons, or disease, or deception. Verdicts in specific cases were invariably derived, singly or in combination, from these three models. In the Brossier case we have in fact the gamut of possible interpretations, from Michel Marescot's invocation of natural (although extra-ordinary) causation through to Father Bérulle's denial of any criterion for distinguishing between possession, disease, and pretence save the authority of the Church. Fifty years later the extent of the controversy in France had increased enormously as a result of the great publicity surrounding the possession of the Ursulines of Loudun and of Madeleine Bavent and others at Louviers in Normandy, but the terms in which it was conducted remained essentially the same.[22] Yet this, in itself, should cause no conceptual uncertainty. There is no reason (in principle) why we cannot offer an account of any number of explanatory schemes from another culture and indicate why one or other of them should have been preferred in specific circumstances. Problems have only arisen because, in effect, historians (and others) have *shared* in these preferences and decided that particular explanations should be privileged on the grounds that they are in fact in accord with realitythat is, with a reality regarded as independent of any particular conceptions of what is real.

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[21] *Maldonado, Traicte des angeset demons, fos. 225'-%'.*

[22] Walker, *Unclean Spirits,* 33-42; Mandrou, Afagij/ra/r *et sorciers,* 168-79,210-312 (esp. 304-10).

A striking example is D. P. Walker's argument that what we ought to be doing in cases of possession from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is discovering what actually happened. For him this excludes the possibility that demoniacs were actually possessed. The undoubted fact that this is not an explanation likely to appeal to a modern audience is his reason for siding with the other two available in the period itself. 'Historians', he urges, 'should not ask their readers to accept supernatural phenomena.'[23] The realism implicit in this recommendation is, no doubt, still seductive. It reassures the observer of exotic behaviour in the past that it can be described in ways that satisfy his or her own expectations of what can and cannot happen. Its limitations are none the less fundamental. The view that we cannot understand the actions and beliefs of others without accepting them as true and valid ourselves preempts the history of cultures with models of reality different from ours. It cannot even begin to account for the activity of the anthropologist. In the case of possession (and much else concerning demonism and witchcraft) our task cannot, therefore, be to trace the relationship between what was said about it and what it 'actually' amounted to—as if the two can be successfully matched up or shown to be at odds. At the very least we are obliged to take up a relativist position with regard to what could count as real. And in order to underpin this we are in need of a social theory in terms of which any behaviour to which meaning is attributed is shown to be constituted, as it were without remainder, precisely by the way it is construed. The immediate advantage would be access to the views and practices of those for whom, in every historically relevant sense of the notion of reality, demoniacs were really possessed. The overall aim would be to unhinge the products of culture from any residual, independent entities of nature and human behaviour in terms of which they may be said, once and for all, to enjoy 'reality'. The purpose would be, as it has been said, to make intelligibility and not reality the historian's target.[24]

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The anthropological literature dealing with possession is of considerable interest in this context and we ought to glance at it too before looking at the European materials. Forms of trance, spirit mediumship, and shamanism have had an extraordinarily wide cultural diffusion. This might be thought to be important because it permits comparison between individual examples of possession and exorcism from early modern Europe and parallel instances from more remote societies. But far more relevant are the general styles of interpretation evolved by anthropologists for dealing with behaviour that is often much more exotic in appearance than anything offered by the European demoniacs. Above all, although not all their interpretative strategies are of equal benefit, it is significant to see why this is the case and, in particular, to find anthropologists moving away from a realist and towards a cultural account of possession behaviour.

A case of the former is the study of the mechanics of altered states of consciousness and the neuro-psychological or psycho-physiological causes of trance states and

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[11] Walker, *Unclean Spirits,* 15.

“ Barthes, 'Discours de l'histoire', 65-75.

ecstasies. As a brilliant example we may take Alfred Gcll's study of the ritual kinetics of the Muria of central India. Here, ritualized motor activities (festive dancing, rhythmic carrying of holy objects, swinging on sacred swings, and so on) are said to assault and disrupt the functions that maintain normal bodily equilibrium in such a way as to lead to vertiginous trance experiences through which the participants communicate with their divinity. Analysis of this sort, however, is not directed at meanings. Gcll speaks memorably of a 'profound cultural preoccupation with dizziness' among the Muria, and indeed, their religious experiences do seem to arise precisely in that area where culture and nature are most intimately linked—where what can be intended and caused in body movement and gesture is continually threatened and overridden by self-induced vertigo. But it is the ultimately physiological basis of possession behaviour that is stressed in this context, not its identity as a culturally defined institution.[25]

As for the model derived from psychiatry, this has influenced the anthropology of possession in the same way as the history of it, and with similar complications. A typical proposal is that spirit possessions in the villages of northern India can be understood as the hysterias produced when individuals already suffering from 'intra-psychic' tension are placed in situations of stress.[26] Another is the suggestion that *ukuthwasa,* the possession of Zulu women by ancestor spirits, may reflect the clinical conditions of constitutional neurosis and the physical symptoms of anorexia nervosa.[27] But the question of whether the symptoms (not to mention the treatment) of mental illness, since they can only be expressed in cultural idioms, are not in greater need of interpretation than of clinical diagnosis, is, as already noted, an open one. That they almost certainly are in the case of possession is suggested by the evidence anthropology offers of its invariably close symbolic relationship to the central religious components of a world-view and the very significant opportunities it therefore provides for communication between sufferers, healers, and the general community.[28] Yet if those involved are endowing mental illness with culturally specific and, therefore, potentially very different meanings, then offering a univocal account of it derived from the psycho-pathology of dissociation and multiple personality looks like the use of a very blunt analytical instrument indeed.

Finally, there are the familiar features of the social-functionalist explanation, where attention is focused on correlations between the incidence of possession in societies or individuals and the whereabouts of tension in social structures, the rate and severity of social change, and the relative status of the participants. Here, possession has been credited with a variety of latent functions, including the cathartic resolution of conflict, the absorption of innovative forces or deviant persons into familiar frameworks, and, especially, the enhancement of the status of deprived or marginal groups. A much-discussed case in point is the way possession provides a strategy for redressing a variety of frustrations and ambitions experienced by women in situations of subservience and affliction.[29] Of course, there is nothing in such an approach that necessarily threatens the reality and the cultural diversity of possession phenomena as perceived by the actors; but there is nothing either to help us to read these self-perceptions with greater insight. For it was the classic aim of functionalism to go behind forms of belief to those unperceived operations in terms of which social stasis is regulated.

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[25] Alfred Gcll, 'The Gods at Play: Vertigo and Possession in Muria Religion', *Man,* NS 15 (1980), 219-48.

[26] Stanley A. and Ruth S. Freed, 'Spirit Possession as Illness in a North Indian Village', in John Middleton (ed.), *Magic, Witchcraft, and Curing* (New York, 1967), 295-320.

[27] S. G. Lee, 'Spirit Possession among the Zulu', in John Beattie and John Middleton (eds.), *Spirit Mediumship and Society in Africa* (London, 1969), 134-51; cf. F. B. Wclboum, 'Spirit Initiation in Ankole and a Christian Spirit Movement in Western Kenya', in Beattie and Middleton (eds.), *Spirit Mediumship,* 303-6; I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism* (Harmondsworth, 1971), 178-205.

[28] See, for example, Gananath Obeyesekere, 'The Idiom of Demonic Possession: A Case Study', *Social Science and Medicine,* 4 (1970), 97-111.

Even if these particular styles of analysis look to be unhelpful, the anthropolog)- of possession is still of crucial significance. At the level of ethnography it reveals, in many different cultural settings, the richness and subtlety of texture of forms of possession and, above all, their integral place in a variety of symbolic schemes. Partly, this is a question of the general expectations warranted by cosmologies. For instance, anthropologists like Robin Horton, John Middleton, and Pierre Verger have pointed to the way in which the principle of spirit possession of humans is perfectly intelligible in the context of overarching beliefs and values. Indeed, this is now presupposed by virtually all observers, whether or not their intention is to show just how this is the case.[30] This is not to say that actual instances, together with the claims to mediumship that often flow from them, do not have to be authenticated. A further finding has been that they invariably do, precisely because (as in the European instances) competing explanations in terms of fraud or (otherwise ordinary) illnesses are available to those concerned. But far from weakening the conviction of those involved that possession is a real phenomenon, this acts as an inherently strengthening feature—and especially so when the tests are at their most stringent.[31] For some time, anthropologists have not felt it worth asking questions about ‘what is actually happening’ in these situations because their enquiries have told them overwhelmingly that what is happening arc forms of behaviour that the actors take to be (barring the unauthenticated examples) genuine cases of possession.

Linked to this is the very wide realization that all aspects of possession behaviour are in fact highly structured, even stereotyped, in terms of a variety of cultural codes

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” I. M. Lewis, ‘A Structural Approach to Witchcraft and Spirit-Possession’, in Douglas (ed.), *Jf'itch-craft Confessions,* 293-309; id., ‘Spirit Possession in Northern Somaliland’, in Beattie and Middleton (eds.), *Spirit Mediumship,* 188-219; id., *Ecstatic Religion, passim-,* id., *Religion in Context: Cults and Charisma* (Cambridge, 1986), 23-50; Roger Gomm, ‘Bargaining from Weakness: Spirit Possession on the South Kenyan Coast’, *Man,* NS 10 (1975), 530-43. For other brief examples, sec Beattie and Middleton (eds.), *Spirit Mediumship,* pp. xxv-xxix, 42,141, 168-9,244-5.

” Beattie and Middleton (eds.), *Spirit Mediumship, pp.xviii-xxiv,* 17,52,221-6- D. A. Noble, ‘Demoniacal Possession among the Giryama’, *Man,* 61 (1961), 50-2.

ⁿ Beattie and Middleton (eds.), *Spirit Mediumship,* pp. xii-xiii, 64-5, 117-8, 128, 169-70, 225-6» 284-5; Gomm, ‘Bargaining from Weakness^{1},536.

and conventions. This is noticeable in the cultic aspects of the behaviour, or where what are taken to be professional skills are involved—as they are for instance in the self-induction of trance states, the interpretation of the pronouncements or demands made by possessing spirits, and the setting up of formal procedures for getting them to depart. Here, the themes of vocation, initiation, and discipline are naturally uppermost. It is also shown in the dramatic quality of possession rituals and spirit cults. Realization of the extent of this element has had the effect of making questions about the physical, literal authenticity of the phenomenon seem altogether redundant. For the idea that participants may be acting out roles in a piece of theatre alters very significantly the idiom in which their actions may be judged to be true or false.[32] Cultural modelling is, however, a feature of every aspect of possession, prescribing and controlling even its apparently most random and anarchic physical manifestations. The essential point is that 'being possessed' only makes sense in terms of the detailed features of a familiar and well-defined social persona—to whom, moreover, everyone else knows how to react.[33]

What anthropology now offers, then, is a way of accounting for possession as a phenomenon with a basis in culture rather than in nature—its very reality being constituted by the categories in terms of which men and women conceive of it. It is important to recognize that these categories are very likely to embrace exactly those aspects of biological, psychological, and social experience to which possession has sometimes been reduced—illness, stress, relative deprivation, or whatever. But if this is the case, then these, too, are symbolic constructions and the relationship between them and possession can no longer be seen as one of cause and effect. Instead, it becomes rather like the relationship between various idioms in the same language. As Michael Lambek has said of the question of physical or mental illness in spirit hosts: 'possession is less a metaphor for illness than illness is a metaphor for possession. Possession does not reflect illness so much as it establishes its presence performatively.'[34] Nor can conceptions of possession be matched up with those aspects of biological, psychological, or social experience that have invariably been regarded in the culture of the Western observer as having a kind of stubborn, irreducible reality. For what possession 'actually' is evidently varies in meaning according to the different symbolic schemes that make it possible (or, indeed, impossible) for it to occur. As a result, removing the undoubted sense of strangeness that we happen to feel when confronted by it in societies culturally remote from our own begins to look less like a search for its causes and more like an attempt to reconstruct and interpret these meanings.

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[32] Beattie and Middleton (eds.), *Spirit Mediumship,* p. xxvi, 64, 166 ff., 185, 225-6; John Beattie, 'Spirit Mediumship as Theatre', *Rain(Royal Anthropological Institute News),* 20 (June, 1977), 1-6; Michel Leiris, *La Possession et ses aspects thedtraux chez les Ethiopiens de Gondar* (Paris, 1958); A. Metraux, Dramatic Elements in Ritual Possession', *Diogenes,* 11 (1955), 18-36; Raymond Firth, 'Ritual and Drama in Malay Spirit Mediumship*, *Comparative Stud, th Society and Hist.* 9(1967), 190-207. But for theatricality in possession and exorcism leading to scepticism about their reality, see Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations,* 94-128.

[33] Aidan Southall, 'Spirit Possession and Mediumship among the Alur*, in Beattie and Middleton (eds.), *Spirit Mediumship,* 243, remarks that 'to become possessed is itself to give oneself up to a pre-ordained pattern.' See also in the same collection, 7,23, 50, 64, 114-19, 140, 166, 276-7; Freed, 'Spirit Possession as Illness', 298-9; Lambek, *Human Spirits,* 89-106.

[34] Lambek, *Human Spirits,* 53; cf. Bruce Kapferer, *A Celebration of Demons: Exorcism and the Aesthetics of Healing in Sri Lanka* (Bloomington, Ind., 1983), 234.

This is, in fact, the approach adopted by Lambek in his own study of spirit possession among the people of Mayotte in the Comoro Islands. As an anthropologist Lambek is committed in principle to the view (which he derives from Clifford Gccrtz) that it is analytically false to distinguish 'behaviour' from the symbolic structures which endow it with meaning. This equips him to recognize the considerable cultural definition involved in Mayotte possession and the extent to which, far from reflecting independently identifiable pathologies, it creates itself the psychological traits appropriate to the identities of spirit, host, and healer and the forms of social interaction that they are required to engage in in order that the curing process may take its course. In doing so, it both presupposes a system of meanings already in place and acts as a channel of communication in its own right. In this context (Lambek argues), the most suitable analytical tools for the anthropologist are not those of psycho-pathology or functionalism but those of structural linguistics. The actions of the possessed convey meaning in the same way as individual forms of speech—that is, by virtue of their place in a language. This is not merely a reference to the fact that actual utterances are involved—forms of address to spirits, pronouncements by them, ceremonial songs and chants, and so forth. Rather, the suggestion is that the formal relationships that make possession as a whole intelligible are the same as those which make up the structure of any system of signs in which, following the linguistic model, meanings are exchanged. Possession behaviour has a sequential axis—a kind of syntax—along which are combined as stages the initial emergence of the spirit, the complex negotiations which are entered into with it, and the public feasts at which it announces its identity. At the same time, and at each point in this progression, meanings are established contrastively, notably in terms of the various oppositions between humans and spirits that serve to define both. The effect is that the observer is able to read the actions which result as if they constituted a text. This frees him or her once and for all from the problem of reference to a 'real' world. For any aspects of the world that are outside the category of meaning—let us say, its neuro-psychological or psycho-pathological aspects—are outside this textual analysis and, therefore, irrelevant to it, while aspects of the world that are construed in the text cannot (manifestly) act as checks on the text's own validity.[3]

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[3] Lambek, *Human Spirits, passim,* but for possession as text, see esp. 1—12,86—180, 181-5; Kapferer, *Celebration of Demons,* 237-8. For a similar approach to the interpretative processes that accompany possession cases, see Judith T. Irvine, 'The Creation of Identity in Spirit Mediumship and Possession', in David Parkin (ed.), *Semantic Anthropology* (London, 1982), 241—60.

27

Possession, Exorcism, and History

> But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.
>
> (Matthew 12:28)

> Therefore now depart, seducer depart. Your abode is the wilderness. Your habitation is the serpent; be humbled and prostrate. Now there is no time to delay. For behold the Lord God approaches quickly, and fire will blaze before him, and precede him, and burn up his enemies on every side.
>
> (Final exorcism, 'De exorcizandis obsessis a demonio', *Rituale Ronianum)*

WE will probably never know enough about spirit possession in early modern Europe to conduct this kind of close textual analysis of the various codes and categories that made it what it ('actually') was and rendered the behaviour of demoniacs intelligible to others. Nor was there anything like the consensus of opinion regarding it that anthropologists usually find in the societies they examine. (Involuntary possession by the forces of evil has, in addition, been much less common in the latter.) On the other hand, there is no doubt that it too was pre-patterned on the basis of cultural expectations. This is clear from its conformity to the classifications of the marks of true possession—superhuman strength, speaking in foreign tongues, horror of sacred objects, and so forth—that were current at the time; it is also seen in the many obvious contrarieties and inversions that marked the behaviour of demoniacs;[1] and it is evident in individual cases like that of the Tudor demoniac Alexander Nyndge, who was said to be 'monstrouslye transformed ... muche lyke the picture of the Devil in a playe'.[2] * * * * * * The inherently theatrical quality of possession and exorcism was, evidently, not lost on the playwrights of the age?

It is also possible to discover a good deal about one at least of the 'languages' in which these cultural expectations were produced and transmitted—the language of demonology. I have already argued that this was much more central to conceptualizations of possession than its neglect in favour of supposedly more realistic modes of explanation suggests. I have also indicated that understanding it depends on taking the culturally perceived reality of possession for granted. In these circumstances, the general analytical aims of cultural anthropologists like Geertz and Lambek, if not the richness of the descriptions they have been able to achieve, may still serve as a model. We have the benefit, too, of Michel de Certeau’s argument that, since demonology enabled exorcists to ‘denominate’ demons, it played an indispensable role in reclassifying the gestures of the possessed women of Loudun (a text ‘in every respect’) as intelligible symbols. The aim of exorcism was to turn the ‘silence’ of these gestures into language; ‘even if there is divergence among exorcists and doctors over the taxonomies by which they effect their reclassifying—that is, if medical and religious knowledge are not akin—in either instance a form of knowledge is assumed to be capable of *naming*.’* In addition, there is a straightforward sense in which demonic possession was seen very much as a ‘text’—that is to say, as an especially vivid message from God concerning sin and repentance. Speaking of the Elizabeth Knapp case, the pastor of Groton told his New England flock: ‘Gods judgements are documents, there are doctrinal conclusions to be drawn for our instruction out of them.’[4] [5] From now on, then, I shall ignore the ‘real’ explanations for possession found in many modern accounts and concentrate instead on its significance for those at the time who accepted, in principle, that it had an adequate, if puzzling, reality of its own.

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[1] For a remarkable account of possession experienced in terms of binary oppositions, sec Jean-Joseph Surin, *Correspondance,* cd. Michel de Ccrteau (Bruges, 1966), 263-4 [letter of 3 May 1635].

[2] [Edward Nyndge], zl *booke declaringe the fearfull vexation of one Alexander Nyndge. Beynge moste horribly* tormented myth an evyll spirit* (1573), Reprints of English Books, 1475-1700, 38 (East Lansing, Mich., 1940), 8. On modelling in possession cases, see MacDonald, 'Religion, Social Change, and Psychological Healing', 115-16; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 572. For a particularly helpful treatment of possession as something that was 'manifested in specific cultural settings and had very specific cultural meanings', see MacDonald (cd)., *Witchcraft and Hysteria in Elizabethan London,* pp. xxxiv-xxxix (quotation at p. xxxv).

[J] Grcenblatl, *Shakespearean Negotiations,* 94-128; J. L. Murphy, *Darkness and Devils: Exorcism and 'King Lear[9]* (London, 1984); Diana de Armas Wilson, *Allegories of Love: Cervantes's 'Persiles and Sigismunda'* (Princeton, 1991), 223-47.

As in the case of anthropology, this will take us away from causes and towards meanings—or, as it might be put, away from symptoms and towards signs. I shall have nothing to say here about how it was thought to be physically possible for demons to inhabit human beings. This was in fact well catered for in the scientific theories of the writers on demonology, so that the actual causation of possession was not, as far as they were concerned, a matter of much perplexity. Although concerned to play down its apparently miraculous aspects, John Darrell was not misrepresenting its essence when he said that it was ‘no more then to be sick of a fever, or to have the palsye, or some other deseasie [j/’f]’.[6] In addition, what possession meant to those who saw it in the ways I shall be exploring was not necessarily what it meant to all those who experienced it, whether as victims, therapists, or mere spectators. What follows, therefore, is also a partial account of contemporary interpretations of a cultural phenomenon that could be read in many other ways.[7] It concentrates on the v icxv that demon possession had a role in the divinely planned scheme of things, and on the influence this had on the formal steps taken to free the possessed from their afflictions by exorcism.

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[4] Certeau, *The Writing of History,* 244-68 (quotation at 247, author’s emphasis); here, as in his *La Possession de Loudun* (Paris, 1970), Michel de Certeau stresses the theatrical and dramaturgical nature of 17th-c. possession cases.

[5] Samuel Willard, *Useful instructions for a professing people in times of great security and degeneracy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1673), 11; Willard’s ‘reading’ of Knapp’s possession is at 21-43.

[6] Darrell, *An apologie,* fo. 11^{v}. For an extremely full account of possession as a physical possibility see Pichard, *Admirable vertu des saincts exorcismes,* 460-674. Other standard accounts in [Kramer and Sprenger], *Malleus maleficarum,* 282-92; Petrus Thyraeus, *Daemoniaci cum locis infestis et terriculamentis noctumis (Cologne,* 1627), bk. 1,1-164 (first pub. 1604).

[7] e.g. Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil,* 171-98, considers possession and exorcism in Augsburg as an

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The principal idiom in which these essentially religious and moral issues were spoken of was that of history. In the first place, possession was readily absorbed by the apocalyptic conceptions of past, present, and future which informed early modern demonology and witchcraft theory as a whole. Darrell himself, who was exorcizing children in Lancashire in the 1590s, thought that it was more than ever prevalent because God wished to repay the evils of the last days and because the Devil was, ‘in regard of the shortnes of his tymc moreadic [s/?] then ever to doe his service and best endevor’. We can now sec that the polemical circumstances in which he made this remark ought not to be allowed to obscure its cogency. Seemingly a devout and high-minded man with a sincere belief in the reality of possession, he was convicted of fraud by the High Commission and had to wage a pamphlet war against those who suggested that there was nothing in the behaviour of demoniacs beyond simulation or non-demonic diseases. Yet at the time his arguments made just as good sense as those of his modern-sounding opponents. There was no reason to doubt that possession was among the plagues and curses with which God had threatened disobedient mankind, and every reason (here Darrell cited the customary texts from 1 Timothy 4; 2 Timothy 3; 2 Peter 3; and Jude) to suppose ‘that in these last dais there shall be perilous and sinfull times, wherein iniquity shall abound, soe as the sonne of man when he commeth, shall scarcely find “any faith upon earth”.’ ‘We must nedes acknowledg, and cannot doubt’, he concluded, ‘but that God may send this plague also in this last age of the worlde.’[8]

In different historical settings, thought Darrell, possession and exorcism fulfilled different functions. At the time of the gospels the urgent need had been for miraculous displays to fortify the faithful and convert waverers. In a declining world it was more essential to know the devil and to unmask the Antichrist; warnings and punishments were more in order. Possession still revealed God’s attributes to men—justice, power, mercy, wisdom, and so on. But Darrell spent far more time denouncing the claim that powers of exorcism were exclusive to the Catholic Church, turning the whole weight of Protestant eschatology against these particular ‘lying wonders’. Not

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expression of confessional rivalry over the relationship between the physical and spiritual realms of religious experience, and as an exploration of the logic of sexual identity. See also Walker and Dickerman, [4] “A Woman under the Influence” ’, 535 (who speak of‘the existence in contemporary popular culture of explanations of demonic possession at variance with those of theologians, physicians, and magistrates.’); Midelfort, ‘The Devil and the German People’, 111,116-19, for what ordinary people contributed to possession and how they interpreted it and shaped it to their own ends.

[1] Darrell, *Anapologie.* fo. 12’ (citing Revelation 12:12); id.,*// true narration of the strange andgrevous vexation by the devil of 7 persons in Lancashire, and William Somers of Nottingham* (n.p., 1600), in John Somers, *A Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts,* cd. Walter Scott (13 vols.; London, 1809-15), iii. 205-6, see also 232. There are accounts of Darrell’s activities and writings in Walker, *Unclean Spirits.* 52-73, and Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic.* 576-80.

only were true dispossessions the only way to expose the false, possession was also a vital corrective to all those—again, more numerous in the last times—who doubted the existence of devils and, by extension, of God. And it was also an essential foretaste of the ultimate demonic punishments shortly to come.

> If the divel deale thus with man, beinge sent forth of God to chastise him for his amendment, how will he intreat him, when he shall fall upon him to execute the vengeance to come? that is, the punishment which in justice is due unto man, and answerable to all the dishonor he hath donne upon earth to the Lord of glory. If, in the former case, he cause such crying, gnashing of teeth, and tormenting, as we have heard, what crying, gnashing of teeth, what tormenting shall there be in the latter?[9]

Such themes were developed with enthusiasm in Germany, where apprehensions concerning the end of the world were particularly vivid, where the themes of sin and chastisement therefore had an uncommon urgency, and where, in consequence, cases of possession were well publicized. In 1584, for example, the Jesuit Georg Scherer linked the case of the Viennese demoniac Anna Schlutterbäurin (supposedly infested with well over 12,000 devils), together with the witchcraft that he thought was the cause of it, to the warnings in Revelation 12: 12 of the devil's 'great wrath' in the last days.[10] In 1605 the preacher Heinrich Riess argued (in disapproving tones) that the multiplying of exorcisms was among the certain signs 'of the speedy advent of the Last Day and the Day of Judgement'.[11] Two of the cases he might have had in mind were reported by other Lutheran clergymen who relied overwhelmingly on eschatological explanations for possession. One was Tobias Seiler, whose *Daemonomania* described the case of the 12-year-old daughter of Georg Lieder from Löwenberg in Silesia—the town where Seiler was pastor and school superintendent. rXmong his preliminary citations Seiler chose an epigram on the signs of affliction that threatened the destruction of the world and a quotation from the Johannine angel who cried 'Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound!' (Revelation 8:13). His dedication to the civic dignitaries and citizens of Lowenberg reads like an abstract of German apocalyptic thought in the period. There were six unmistakable signs 'that the world is down to its last dregs *(attJJ'den Heflin gehe),* and that the final breach must soon be made'. Among them were prodigies in nature, heedlessness of sin, unprecedented immorality, acute social disorder, and, of course, the rabid fury of the devil. Let loose in the world, he was attempting to appease his wrath by swamping it with idolatry and epicurean vice, by taking possession of both the bod-

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’ Darrell, *True narration.* 246; cf. id., *An apologie.* fo. 21*. The eschatology of this argument derives from Matthew 13:49-50: 'So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.'

-’ Georg Scherer, *Chriitliehe Erinnerung, bey der Historien von jüngst beichehener Erledigung einer Juncifrawen, die mil zmoljftausent techs hundert zwey und fiinjftzig Teufel besetsen geweien* (Ingolstadt, 1584), 21-3.

[11] Cited Janssen, *History of the German People,* xii. 353.

ics and the spiritual lives of individuals, by pacts with magicians like Johann Faust and Christoph Wagner, or by simply absconding with his victims. The possession of the girl made obvious sense in these circumstances; as a particularly apt repayment for men’s sins and their ignoring of all other warnings of the Last Judgement, God had set before them a spectacle of his wrath *(Zornspiegel)* that would terrorize everyone who witnessed it and soften the hardest, most unrepentent heart.[12]

The pastor Nicolaus Blum evidently thought in the same general terms. His account of the possession of an unnamed Bohemian student, successfully exorcized in 1603 at Pirna, also opens with the loosing of the devil after his thousand-year bondage and his anger at having so little left of history to ruin. The seizure of the student, as well as recent cases of demonic obsession, were proof that all the prophecies of St John were being realized.[13] Around the middle of the seventeenth century, the theology faculty at Rostock heard a dissertation on possession from one of its professors, for which Revelation 12: 12 was again the inspiration.[14] And as late as 1689 the town physician of Alfeld, Elias Henckel, began a treatise on possessions, and other demonic assaults on the body, by remarking that Satan’s hatred and envy of God and men was especially inflamed ‘in these times of the ageing of the world’.[15] However, undoubtedly the fullest discussion of these themes in Germany was a work of 1595 entitled *Notwendige Errinnerung. Vonn des Sathans letzten Zornsturm* by the church superintendent of Mecklenburg, Andreas Celichius. Celichius felt that a brand-new study of possession was badly needed so that spiritual guidance might be given to the greatly increased number of people affected by it—there had been thirty cases in Mecklenburg alone. Its meaning, he urged, stemmed from its place in a decaying world. Demoniacs were vehicles for divine punishments for the unprecedented crimes of men, they were harbingers of terrible changes in Church and State, and they were part (with visions and ghosts) of the devil’s reaction to the advent of the Lutheran faith—‘as though he was raising all the storms of his wrath because he knew that the Day of Judgement was at hand, and that his own kingdom on earth was drawing to an end’.[16]

In France in 1582, at Soissons, the devil inside Laurent Boissonct, when asked for the name of his master, replied ‘Antichrist’, whereupon the exorcist Charles Blendcc told him that he was lying.[17] Crespet’s premonitions of the last times also seem to have been prompted by possession cases.[18] After the seventeenth-century demoniac Elisabeth de Ranfaing had recovered from six years of possession to found the Order of the Refuge at Nancy, she was the object of the unofficial (and, ultimately, banned) Jesuit cult of the *'médaillistes',* allegedly centred on the beliefs that the end of time was near, that the Antichrist was imminent, and that magic was consequently universal in France.[19] But the most thoroughly eschatological, indeed millenarian, interpretation of a French possession (before those of 1610-11 and 1613-21 described in the following chapter) was that given in the earlier case of Nicole Obry from Vervins, near Laon in Picardy, by its greatest publicizer, 'Jean Boulaese'. 'Boulaese', professor of Hebrew at the College de Montaigu in Paris and an apparent pseudonym of Guillaume Postel[20], set the episode in the time-span of universal history at the point when the sixth age was ending and the kingdom of Christ, prophecied in Daniel 7:27, and Revelation 11:15, was about to begin.[21] The victory of Christ over the girl's principal occupant, Beelzebub—she was fed consecrated hosts for two months and finally exorcized in February 1566—thus became a sign of the final defeat of evil and heresy, the freeing of the Church from its escalating afflictions, and the entry of the saints into the seventh and last age. 'Boulaese' made much of Beelzebub's own reluctant admission that he had entered her body 'that all men may be one'. His eventual expulsion would convert the Huguenots ('Boulaese' added the Jews and Turks) and thus bring a millenarian unity of belief to the world. Catholics were invited to see the struggle for Nicole Obry and its miraculous outcome as an emblem of the two competing routes to the Last Judgement, and as an opportunity for them too to make a decisive choice between heaven and hell.[22]

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[12] Tobias Seiler, *Daemonomania: Uberaus schreckliche Historia, von einem besesseneit zwelj]]ahrigen jungfrdwlein zu Lesrenberg in Schlesien in diesem 1605jahr* (Wittenberg, 1605), sigs. Ai’, Aii^{r}—Bi^{f}.

[13] Blum, *Historische erzehlung,* sig. Aii^{r}.

[14] Johann Georg Dorsch,/)ra«« (Daniel Springinsgut, *respondens), Dissertatio de horrenda et miserabili Satanae obsessione, eiusdemque ex obsessis expulsione* (Wittenberg, 1672), sig. A2^{r} (originally presented in 1656).

[15] Elias Heinrich von Henckel, *Ordo et methodus cognoscendi et curandi energumenosseti a stygio cacodaemone obsessos(VrznY(\sn/Qdcc*and Leipzig, 1689), 1.

[16] Celichius, *Nolrrendige Errinnerung,* sig. Bii^{r}.

[17] Charles Blendcc, *Cinq histoires admirable!, esquelles est monstre comme miraculeusement par la vertu et puissance du S. Sacrement del’Autel, a este chasse Beelzebub prince des diables, avec plusieurs autres demons, qui se disoient estre de ses subjects, hors des corps de quatre diverses personnel: Et le tout advenu en ceste presente annee, 1582, en la ville et diocese de Soissons* (Paris, 1582), fos. 111’, 1 14^{r}-15^{r}; sec Walker, *Unclean Spirits,* 28-33, for the Soissons cases and the influence on them of the earlier exorcisms at Laon.

A further broad indication of the kind of historical significance attached to possession is that individual cases are often found recorded and discussed, along with other eschatological signs, in the prodigy books of the period—in Wolffhart's *Prodigiorum ac ostentorum chronicon,* in the collections of *Wunderzeichen* by Fincel and Goldwurm, in Boaistuau's *Histories prodigieuses* and its imitations, and so on.[23] For men

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[11] Crespet, *Deux Livres,* fos. 196'—214.

” Etienne Delcambre and Jean Lhermitte, *Un Cas Enigmatique de possession diabolique en Lorraine au XS'lf siecle. Elisabeth de Ranfaing l'energumene de Nancy fondatrice de t'ordre du Refuge* (Nancy, 1956), *passim,* esp. 37-9,134; Mandrou, *Magistrals etsorciers,* 250-1.

[20] For the case that 'Boulaese' was Postel (a case based partly on Postel's millcnarianism), see Marion L. Kuntz, *Guillaume Postel, Prophet of the Restitution of all Things: His Life and Thought* (The Hague, 1981), 149-62.

[21] The Revelation verse is a key text for 'Boulaese': 'And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world arc become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.' See Jchan Boulaese [pseud, of Guillaume Postel?], *Le Thresor et entiere histoire de la Iriomphante victoire du corps de Dieu surl'esprit mating Beelzebub* (Paris, 1578), title-page and address to Pope Gregory XIII, fo. 8'; details of the origins of this work and the case itself are in \\alker, *Unclean Spirits,* 19—28. 'Boulaese' had already published three accounts, including one in which the story was told in Latin, French, Spanish, Italian, and German; seejehan Boulaese, *Le Miracle de Laon en Lannoys* (Cambrai, 1566), ed. A. H. Chaubard (Lyons, 1955).

'Boula [illegible], *Le* [illegible]eso
40r 2 474 7^'r7 nr so [illegible] ere hi5, ire addrCSS 10 GreBory XIII> *fos_ 6-8: 156 175_7 199 286,*

[21] Wolflhart, *Prodigiorum,* 560,644; Fincel, *Wunderzeichen,* sig. Kviii" (and see Fincel's long account

like Richard Baxter and Increase and Cotton Mather, whose interest in the coming of the millennium went hand in hand with the pursuit of‘providences’, stories of demoniacs had a special significance.[24] Of all the phenomena associated with demonism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries possession and exorcism seem to have had a special capacity to astonish. And this, in turn, made them particularly popular vehicles for eschatological expectations. The behaviour of individual demoniacs could be so striking as to secure repeated references in the literature. This was the case with Gertrud Fischer, a girl of 16 from Frankfurt an der Oder, who in 1536 began eating money while possessed,[25] and it was true of Nicole Obry, whose case was linked (by the dean of the cathedral at Laon, Christofle Hericourt) to the prevalence of monsters in France, and whose exorcism was allegedly followed by its own confirming wonders.[26]

Alternatively, a virulent outbreak in one geographical area could arouse a spate of eschatological comment, as happened during and after the flux of cases in Mecklenburg, Friedeburg, and Spandau in Brandenburg in the 1590s.[27] Individual pieces of possession behaviour too could evoke this response. What happened to the demoniac Margaret Cooper of Somerset was bracketed with prodigious sightings in the skies, monsters, earthquakes, and comets, all of which were warnings to the English ‘to be watchfull for the day of the Lorde which is at hand’.[28] In 1618 Sanson Birettc, a member of the community of Augustins at Barfleur in Normandy, published a treatise on a recent possession case brought before the magistrates of Valognes. In commenting on the enormous powers of the devil, especially in causing illness, he remarked that these were now so exaggerated that they could hardly be said to be more potent than in the age of the Antichrist himself. There always had been demoniacs; ‘but since we arc moving more towards the waning of the world, so we experience more monstrous and strange things which the subtle and incomprehensible artifice of devils have

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of a possession at Joachimstal in 1559 in his *Wunderzeichen, Derdritte Teil}',* Goldwurm, *Wunderzeichen buch,* fos. cxxxvi’-cxxxviii*; Boaistuau, *Histoiresprodigieuses,* iii (vol vi). 17-32; Bateman, *The doome wanting alt nten to thejudgemente,* 419.

[2<] Lamont, *Richard Baxter,* 31; Increase Mather, *An essay for the recording of illustrious providences. Wherein an account is given of many remarkable and very memorable events, which have happened tn this last age, especially in New England* (1684), in Burr (cd.), *Narratives,* 13, 18-23; Cotton Mather, *Memorable providences, relating to witchcrafts and possessions* (1689), in Burr (cd.), *Narratives',* id., *Magnaha Chnsti Americana,* bk. 4,73-4.

[21] WolfThart, *Prodigiorum,* 560; Fincel, *Wunderzeichen,* sig. Kviii$^{r"'}$; Goldwurm, *Wunderzeichen buch,* fos. cxxxvii'-cxxxix^{r}; Stymmcl, *Kurtzer Unterricht von Wunderwerken,* sigs. Xi-Yii*. See also Andreas Ebert, *Wundere zeitung von einem Geld teujfel* (Frankfurt/Odcr, 1538); Jodocus Willichius, *In Jonam prophetam, nostro exulceratissimo seculo accommodata ecphrasis compendiosa* (Frankfurt/Main, 1549), sigs. Aii’-Aiii'. Commentary in Midelforl, ‘Sin, Melancholy, Obsession’, 137.

[24] ‘Boulacsc’, *Le Thresor et entiere histoire,* 38-9, 218; cf. Boaistuau, *Histoires prodigieuses,* iii (vol. vi). 17-32, ii (vol. iii). 220-54 (De Bellcforcst); Gemma, *De naturae divinis characterismis,* bk. 2, 46—51; Schcnda, *Die Franzdsische Prodigienliteratur,* 49.

[27] Cclichius, *Notwendige Erinnerung,* sig. Bi i^{r}; Engel, *Wider Natur und Wunderbtich,* 302 (= 212>—231; cf. Coler, sec n. 34 below. I have not been able to trace an apparently detailed account of the Brandenburg possessions by a superintendent at Frankfurt/Odcr; Praetorius, *Erschrockliche und wahrhaftige Geschtchte* (Frankfurt/dder[?J, 1595), cited by Janssen, *History ofthe German People,* xii. 338.

[21] Anon., *A true and most dreadfull discourse ofa woman possessed with the devil!* (London, 1584), sig. Aiii’.

brought upon people, either by their own efforts, or by the intervention of demonic witches.’ What Birette had in mind specifically was the vomiting by demoniacs of foul liquids, stones, pieces of wood and iron, bones, shells, thorns, hair, and live cels.[2]’ According to Samuel Willard, the Knapp case too was an ‘extraordinary and stupendous’ providence to prepare New Englanders for ‘shaking times’. ‘The nearer they approach,’ he warned, ‘the more need have we to be hastened and roused from our loytering.’[30]

It was not just that the grotesque character of possession mirrored the aberrations of the last times. In a special sense, the misfortunes of the possessed were, as another compiler of wonders, Simon Goulart, put it, ‘so many prodigies and predictions of things to come’. In the light of what was said earlier it is worth noting in passing that Goulart recognized well enough that there could be merely natural explanations for frenzy and madness but still thought that when this kind of furious behaviour was found in the possessed it could be genuinely demonic, the demons either mingling with merely natural causes or effecting their own. He also admitted that aspects of possession, such as the voiding of the sort of objects that amazed Birette, could be fraudulent—the frauds in question being nevertheless of the devil’s own making. What is important is that neither of these qualifications concerning its authenticity prevented possession behaviour having enough cogency to carry a historical message.[31] Mclanchthon made exactly the same points in a letter to Hubert Languet: ‘Though there be sometimes Natural Causes of Madness, yet it is most certain that Devils enter into the Bodies of some, and cause Madness and Torments to them, either with Natural Causes or without them; for it is manifest, that such persons are oft delivered without Natural Remedies. And these Diabolical Spectacles are oft Prodigies and Significations of future things.’[32]

That this was a widely shared assumption, and that ‘future things’ were often thought of as final as well, can be seen from two further examples from the literature on prodigies, written at very different levels of sophistication and clearly aimed at different audiences. One is taken from Cornelius Gemma’s *Cosmocritice* (1575), which we have already noticed as an important academic contribution to the field. Within his evidently eschatological framework the celebrated case of Nicole Obry has, again, a prophetic character. Despite its appearance as a very singular miracle, when related to other prodigies of the age (the tribulations of the French Church, the widespread disorders in commonwealths, the plagues and natural disasters of those years) secrets of the future could be discerned in it. Gemma was especially alerted by numerological clues. The fact that the exorcisms at Laon had succeeded in driving

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[29] 1618) 25^6O [illegible] *[illegible] ‘ouchanl les responses des diables exorcizes* (Rouen,

[50] Willard, *Useful instructions,* 32, sig. A2'. For further New World possession cases in an eschatological context, see Fernando Cervantes, ‘The Devils of Querétaro: Scepticism and Credulity in Late Seventeenth-Century Mexico’, *Past and Present,* 130(1991), 51-69.

” Goulart, *Admirable and memorable histories,* 161-82, quotation at 162.

[11] Cited by Daxter, *Certainty,* 126-7 (also by Weyer, *Depraestigiisdaenionum,* 469).

out first twenty-six inferior demons, then three senior commanders, and finally their ruler Beelzebub reflected the principle that very badly disordered societies could seldom be brought back to their original purity before thirty years passed.[33] Altogether less elevated in tone, but none the less typical of a very popular genre, is a short homiletic pamphlet of 1595 by the provost to the consistory of Berlin, Jacob Coler. It describes the recent wonders from the territory of Brandenburg—including a young girl visited nocturnally by an archangel and a black devil-man, a series of apparations in the skies, including a flaming cross, and scores, even hundreds, of cases of possession. Coler regards all these as signs that the prophecies of Joel 2 concerning the second coming are being fulfilled and that the Last Judgement 'cannot be far off'. But it is possession and its treatment in particular which (he says) merit special study:

> For it will go further, and the devil will not rest with us. He will travel on and visit other lands as well, and in his wrath will rage (nwten) and storm in a final tempest, to try the human race and work to sec whether he can fill hell with yet more people before the Day of Judgement.[34]

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If in early modern Europe possession by devils was only interpreted in terms of eschatological history because *all* forms of demonism were viewed in this way, this would tell us little or nothing about its own individual cultural identity. We would still have to ask what it was, specifically, that made it an eschatological event. But we can now see that this was not the case. The overriding principle of demonology in this particular idiom was the concept of*postremusfuror Satanae,* derived from Revelation 12: 12. And the behaviour of demoniacs was not just another example of what this text promised but its purest expression. Their extravagant disorders and the terrible signs of strife apparent during attempts to exorcize them were perfect illustrations of the notion that the devil's final attacks on mankind would stem essentially from a raging fury, and not merely from his traditional enmity. Indeed, and this cannot be overstressed, the language used to describe the one was often identical to the language used to describe the other. The cluster of images of storming, raving, roaring, and frenzy was dominant in both. Demoniacs were nothing if not physically convulsed by their experiences; but 'convulsed with rage' is a derivation of the German verb *wiiten* which we have just seen Coler using to describe the actions of the devil and which was in fact commonplace in all eschatological descriptions of demonism. Demoniacs foamed and appeared to be rabid; but foaming and fuming are again linked to *wiiten* and to other verbs with the same range of associations like *rasen* and *toben* which German preachers on the last times used liberally to capture the right eschatological mood.[35]

” Gemma, *De naturae divinis characterismis,* bk. 2,46-51.

[14] Jacob Coler, *Eigen tlicher bericht, von den seltzamen undzu unserer Zeit unerhorten, Il'underwercken und Geschichten, so sich newlicher zeit in der Mark Brandenburg zugetragen, und verlauflen haben$_t$ und noch teglich geschehn* (Erfurt, 1595), sigs. Aii'-Aiii^r, sec also Biii'-Biiii', Cii'.

[15] For samples of these images, see Paul Rober, *Landtagspredigten* (Halle, 1621), sigs. Liv^r, **Mi'–Mii'** (Rober's two sermons juxtapose eschatology' with the spiritual significance of demonic possession); Taurcr, *Dergeistliche ... Feigenbawm,* sig. Jii'; Decimator, *Gewissens TeuJJel,* sigs. aiii^r-aiv^r; Schaller, *Herolt,* sig. Nii*; Seiler, *Daemonomania,* sig. Aiii^r; and in the behaviour of another demoniac, Sixtus Agricola

This linguistic conjunction brings us very decidedly back to the problems of interpretation considered in the previous chapter. In reformulating them, we might say that cultural preferences have led most modern observers to treat early modern descriptions of possession as if they were straightforward empirical statements—statements about the predisposing physical and mental circumstances of demoniacs, their behaviour while possessed, their response to treatment, and so on. And on this basis they have arrived at judgements about the medical or psychological conditions that must have obtained, or the amount of fraudulent activity that must be allowed for. But in the descriptions under discussion here the physical appearance of possession behaviour (its describable exterior), however extravagant and bizarre, could be construed in exactly the same way as the moral behaviour of the agent held responsible for its occurrence—the latter being, so to speak, implicated in the former. This means that, cultural preferences aside, we may, after all, have no way of separating out the purely physical symptoms of possession as items for diagnostic inspection. Instead, we are bound to recognize that its external manifestations and its internal inspiration could form an indivisible whole—each being informed by, and wholly intelligible in terms of, the other?[6]

Another way to put this is, of course, simply to stress possession's cultural identity, a conclusion to which all the material in this chapter is intended to point. For it is a defining feature of cultural forms that the actions they warrant only exist at all as actions of a certain sort because of the properties arbitrarily conferred on them by systems of representation. Needless to say, this transforms the appropriate body movements from mere motor activities into gestures (interpreted in the broadest sense). But this is an especially vital matter in an area like possession where so much that was constitutive both of the experience of being possessed and of the ability to interpret that experience was obviously gestural. We can, therefore, extrapolate what was physical in possession behaviour and make it yield explanations in a different context only if we divorce it from precisely those semantic circumstances that enabled victims and observers at the time to say (and argue about) just what it was. These included (but are not, of course, exhausted by) both the general principle of Satan's apocalyptic wrath and the idea that genuine possessions were intrinsically prodigious. For many contemporaries, then, being possessed, both as a state of mind

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[Bewerlcin] and Georg Witmer, ***Ersehrockliche ganlz warhajftige Geschicht, welche sich mil ApoIonia, Hannsen Geisslbrechts Burgers zu Spall inn dem Eystdtter Bistumb, HaussJrawen, so den 20. Octobris, Anno 82. ion dem bösen Feind gar hart besessen unnd doth den 2d. gedachts Mona Is widerumb durch Colles gnddige Hilff, ausssolchergrossen Pein unnd Marler entlediget worden, verlaujjin hat*** (Ingolstadt, 1587), 7. For a case of possession in the Brandenburg town of Havelberg reported in the equivalent Latin imagery, see Dorsch,/>«r-ses, ***Dissertatio de horrenda el miserabiliSatanae obsessione,*** sigs. A2^{r}, B2^{r}.

[36] As they are, for instance, in this proposition from P[ierre] M[arescot], ***Traicte des marques des possedez el la preuve de la veritable possession des religieuses de Louviers*** (Rouen 1644) repr in ***Recueil de pieces sur les possessions des religieuses de Louviers*** (2 vols. ini; Rouen, 1879,5: 'Que les mouvemens, les cris, les hurlemens que fait le diable dans les organes empruntez, monstrent qu'en quelque lieu qu'il soit il y soufTre l'exeez de son tourment, et la rigueur des peines dont le jugement de Dieu a puny son orgueil et sa desobeissance.'

and as a set of bodily movements, had meaning in terms of eschatological expectations concerning the activities of devils.

* * *

With this in mind we can move on to consider further ways in which possession was linked essentially (and not merely as a contingent matter) to the ending of the world. For other conceptual symmetries are apparent between the overall patterning of Christian history and the notion that devils could both take possession of and be forced out of individual Christians. They stem from the depiction of the whole historical process as a demonomachy and its subdivision into stages marked by the relative strengths of God and the devil. Thrown originally from heaven in a first restraint, the devil continued to be active enough to make Old Testament history a high point of demonic strength. Curbed again by Christ (1 John 3: 8: ‘For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil’), he remained dormant pending the unprecedented, but temporary, freedoms allowed him in Revelation 12:12, and 20:7 and his conclusive overthrow in Revelation 20:10. No doubt this was a familiar narrative; it was the Christian achievement of what Mircea Eliade calls the ‘salvation’ of time.[37] But since the very meaning of history depended on the successive binding and loosing of demonism, it is not surprising that it could also provide an important symbolic framework for possession and exorcism.

Thus in 1607, in Madrid, a devil occupying Maria Garcia, 43 years old and possessed for seven years, was reported to have boasted to exorcists that, although Michael had originally thrown Lucifer into hell, he was confidently expecting victor}' in the next historical encounter, once the Antichrist had arrived.[38] Also typical in this respect was the French Benedictine cleric René Benoist, who thought that history’s underlying design had been expressed previously in contests between holy men and magicians (Moses and Pharaoh, Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar, Peter and Simon Magus, Paul and Elymas) and that currently it was inspiring Catholic priests to exorcize devils.[39] The Capuchin Esprit de Bosrogcr, likewise, opened his long account of the possessions at Louviers by situating them in the struggle for supremacy that had begun with Lucifer’s revolt, was climaxing (like magic and witchcraft) in the last age, and would shortly end with the consummation of history -[40] According to the Spanish expert on exorcism, Raffaele della Torre, Revelation 20 [17]* * * * * * * * * * * was the text that made it clear that divine power was the principal efficient cause of the expulsion of demons.[41]

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[17] Mircea Eliade, ***The Myth of the Eternal Return or, Cosmos and History,*** trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, 1971), 104.

[M] Anon., ***Erschrbcklichedoch warhajfte Geschicht, Diesich in derSpanischen Statt, Madrileschosgenannt, mitt einer verheuraten Weibsperson zugetragen, welche von einergantzen Legion Teujfelsibenjar lang besessen gewest. Unddurch Patrem Ludovicum de Torre, der Societet Jesu Priester den 14. Octobris, diss nechstuerschinen 1607. Jars, vermittelst Gottlicher hiljf und beystandt, widerumb erlediget worden*** (Munich, 1608), sig. Aiv*; with some historical inconsistency, the devil announced that Christ had also come again in 1607. The case was witnessed by members of the Dominican, Franciscan, and Jesuit orders and probably recorded by a notary ofthe Toledo Inquisition.

[M] Benoist, ***Petit fragment catechistic,*** 34; cf. ‘Boulacsc’, ***Le Thresor et entiere histoire,*** address to Gregory XIII, fo. 8'.

[40] Esprit de Bosrogcr, ***Piete af/ligee,*** 1-12,20,35-55,369-88.

Benoist's collaborator in demonology, Pierre Masse, counted three historical defeats for devils: in Lucifer's fall, in the New Testament, and at the end of the world.[42] But for virtually all those interested in demoniacs, the nodal points of history were the first and second Advents. Since the first had been marked by significant numbers of exorcisms, so the times immediately prior to the second would be marked by significant numbers of possessions. Here too, demoniacs provided eschatological clues, and they did so in a manner which no other aspect of contemporary demonism could match. This is how Johannes Biigenhagen and Philipp Mclanchthon interpreted the case of an 18-ycar-old girl from Lubeck, and why pastors and theologians investigating the Brandenburg possessions in 1593-4 saw them as indications of the Second Coming.[43] Others thought that Christ himself had indicated the link in his response to the Pharisees in Matthew 12:28 (see epigraph above), a text with which 'Boulaesc' also prefaced his account of Nicole Obry. Tobias Seiler thought he detected it too in the pronouncement, 'Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out' (John 12:31), for this finds its way onto the page of apocalyptic texts that opens his possession tract, *Daemotiomania.* More than anything else, it was the fact that Christ had fought the devil by actually exorcizing demoniacs that suggested an apocalyptic role for their contemporary German equivalents. For Seiler Christ was a 'most mighty exorcist *(grosmechtigeteiiffelsbinder)'.* Jacob Color argued that, since he had come into the world to break the devil's hold over mankind, the gospels and the history of the early church were naturally full of demonic possession; 'who now knows', he speculated, 'whether it might not also make for Christ and his Last Coming.' In its very structure Caspar Goldwurm's *Wunderzeichen* established the same point. The exorcisms of the New Testament illustrated the working of God's own personal wonders, with which the book opens; the possessions of modern Europe illustrated the theme of *Satanus soluttis (aussgelassen)* with which it closes. Moreover, Goldwurm's demonology itself takes the form of a history of the devil and of the periodic ebbing and flowing of his powers.[44]

A particularly clear statement of these historical correlations appears in Daniel Schaller's *Herolt* (1595), a systematic study of over twenty proofs of the world's imminent end drawn from scripture. Schaller was the Lutheran pastor of Stendal in Brandenburg and later published a collection of eight witchcraft sermons. His eighteenth proof is drawn from the unchaining of the devil and accomplishment ofRevelation 12.12. This he sees almost entirely in terms of the phenomenon of possession.

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[41] DellaTorre, ***Traetatus de potestate ecclesiae coereendi daemones,*** 74-5.

[42] Masse, ***De/'imposture, fos.81'-8'.***

[42] Johannes Biigenhagen and Philip Mclanchthon, ***Zwo wunderbarlich Hystorien zu bestettigungderlere des Evangelii***(n.p., n.d. [1530]), sig. Aii'; Midelfort, 'The Devil and the German People' 106

[44] 'Boulaese', ***Le Thresor el entiere histoire,*** fo. 39'; Seiler, ***Daemonomania,*** sigs. Ai', Bii'; Coler, ***Eigenthcher bench,*** sig. Ct'; Goldwurm, ***Wunderzeichen buck,*** fos. xiiii^{M}, exxiv'-exlii'.

As a sign of the coming of the Last Judgement (Schaller thought that the Antichrist's downfall had been scheduled for 1586), the Devil was taking control of spiritual and moral lives and indeed of actual bodies:

> For just as in the time of the first bodily coming of the Lord Christ to a deliverance and mediation, a great swarm and number of such poor possessed folk was found everywhere, so there is no doubt that in these present times, the swarm and number of demoniacs is so great, both near and far, that it is a truly powerful and double herald that for the second and last time our dear Lord and true saviour Jesus Christ will come ... to break the hold of that hellish monster who has made his palace in mens' bodies, and destroy entirely the work of devils with the Last Judgement.[45]

It bears repeating that only demoniacs could serve in this way as symbols of the inner dynamic of Christian history. In an age accustomed to polarize the moral categories on which this history ultimately rested, possession and its treatment were the most vivid possible demonstration of the relative strengths of good and evil in the world. The principle that contraries were driven out by contraries could even be applied to them.[46] At two moments in time Christ and the devil came into direct confrontation and on both occasions demoniacs were, in effect, the battleground. The natural expectation was that the pattern established in the gospels would be repeated in the 'last days', that possessions would multiply both as a sign of Christ's impendingarrival and as an appropriate focus for the apocalyptic events that were due to follow.

This means that contemporaries had a way of accounting in general terms for the high incidence of possession. But it also suggests that, like the Comoro islanders, they had a way of reading the sequential, syntagmatic stages through which individual cases passed. The fact that devils were first free to take possession of demoniacs and then forced to depart from them made each particular case history a kind of microcosmic reflection of, and a commentary on, the historical process as a whole. The two histories were, indeed, homologous, and multiple transfers of meaning were possible between them. Above all, they followed the same trajectory and reached identical climaxes. Dispossessions were very frequently seen as escalating through phases of ever-increasing confrontation, with devils at their most resistant and violent on the verge of departure, and exorcism in its most peremptory and threatening form at the moment of success. Following it, demoniacs lay in total stillness—as in death, it was often remarked. The symmetry with the history of the world is very marked, a narrative that likewise proceeded through growing confrontation to final cataclysm and on to the repose of the eschaton.[47]

The length, too, of spirit occupancy matched the time-spans of the demonomachy. What went on in the bodies of the possessed, what went on in the course of

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« Schaller, ***Herolt,*** sig. Nii'. " Thyraeus, ***Dacmoniaci,*** bk. 1,83.

[47] For dispossessions in these terms, see More, ***A true discourse,*** 60-1,67; John Swan,// ***true and breife report, of Mary Glovers vexation, and of her deliverance by the meanesoffastinge and prayer (n.p., 1603),repr.*** in MacDonald (cd.), ***Witchcraft and Hysteria in Elizabethan London,*** 46-7; Blendec, ***Cinq histoires admirable:,*** fo. 93'; Thyraeus, ***Dacmoniaci,*** bk. 1,151.

their therapies, and what went on in the history of the world conformed to the same rhythm, as well as the same syntax. Henri Boguet reported that the demons inside Rollandc Du Vernois refused to leave her because 'their hour was not yet come, and that they still had a long time'.[48] This was, no doubt, an echo of the complaints of New Testament devils about Christ tormenting them 'before the time' (Matthew 8: 29), a text that led John Napier, the mathematician and eschatologist, to concede that the devil knew the exact timing of the world's end.[49] Evidently, each possession, like the demon-infested epoch in which it was happening, had a finite duration and fixed end-point. As Margaret Muschamp, an English demoniac of the Civil War period, said: 'Though God hath suffered the Divcll to have power to torment us; they now have their times.' Much more often, devils declared that their time was *short,* an admission that surely could not have failed to recall that ur-text of eschatological demonology, Revelation 12: 12. Muschamp's occupants 'thought because their time was but short, to have tormented [her] worse than ever.'[50] Mary Hall of Gadsden in Hertfordshire apparently told her exorcists that her spirits 'would be gone to morrow; [f]or that they had a short time, and thereforo [s/c] must be busie in shewing a few prankes more, ere they went out'.[51] As always it is difficult to apportion responsibility for such statements between those who uttered them, those to whom they were uttered, and those who reported them afterwards. But if they do reflect the sentiments of the possessed, apocalyptic history may well have provided categories, not merely for thinking about possession, but for structuring the experience of it as well.

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The exorcisms adopted in the medieval Church had themselves reflected and confirmed these meanings. Tertullian, Minucius Felix, and Cyprian suggested that the force of the ritual lay partly in its threatening evocation of the Last Judgement and the anguish that this brought to devils.[52] In the Catholic liturgical literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries this was a much more insistent theme. There was an official version in the *Rituale Romanum* of 1612, but historians have badly neglected the many alternative rites recommended to priests in the other printed manuals of the period. These included instructions on how to prepare for the ceremony, details of what spiritual or physical purgations were necessary for the energumen, and (in cases where the agency of witches was suspected) the means for

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” Boguet, ***Examen of witches,*** 175, sec also 176—7; for further examples, sec Anon., ***Histoire mencilleuse advenue au pais de Caux, en la ville de Dieppe, d'une femme, laquelle estant tourmentee elpossedee du Dyable par un long temps, et comme elle a reconvert sante et ledict Diable chasse de son corps*** (Paris, n.d.), sig. Aiii'i Jeanne des Anges, Strar Jeanne ***des Anges*** ,108.

[49] Napier, ***Plaine discovery***, 22.

[50] Anon., ***Wonderful! news from the north. Or, a true relation ofthe sad and grievous torments, inflicted upon the bodies of three children of Mr. George Muschamp, late ofthe county of Northumberland, by witch-craft*** (London, 1650), 18 and (first quotation) 20.

” ***Dnge, Daimonomageia,*** 33; further example from 1621 in Fairfax, ***Daemonologia,*** 57.

“ Adolph Franz, ***Die Kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter*** (2 vols.; Frciburg/Brcisgau, 1909), ii-534-5, see also 574,579, and for occasional eschatology in the texts of exorcisms, 589,591,600,611,613. For the parallel use of the Last Judgement in medieval necromantic exorcisms', secKieckhefer, ***Magic,*** 167.

discovering and cleansing the actual instruments or agents of malefice. In the main, they consisted of readings and lessons from supportive scriptures, specially devised prayers, and, of course, actual commands to devils. All the historical episodes of the Christian dcmonomachy were strongly represented,[53] but there is no doubt that the eschatology of the Book of Revelation was a major weapon in the rhetorical and sacramental power of the exorcist. More than technical procedures, then, exorcisms were ‘an exegesis on the religious and cultural order’,[54] and we should therefore pay close attention to what they said.

The texts in Titulus xii of the *Rituale Romanttm* are drawn mostly from the Psalms and from New Testament examples of the subjection of devils. Yet it is impossible not to detect the eschatological urgency in the final and most powerful adjuration (at the head ofthis chapter), with its sources in Revelation 1:16and 19:15.[55] The popular handbook *Fttga Satanae,* issued by the Italian priest Pietro Stampa, appeared first in Como in 1597 and was later republished several times either singly, in company with the *Malleus maleficarum,* or in the greatest compendium of exorcism manuals, the *Thesaurus exorcismorum atque coniurationum terribilium.* Stampa also favours citations from the Psalms and gospels, but as the ceremony builds toward the ritual burning of magical objects he turns more frequently to Revelation and to those verses dealing with the destruction by fire of sorcerers and worshippers of the Beast. Two effigies are to be prepared, one in the image of a demon and the other to represent the agent of *maleficium,* whether pythoness *(Pytho maleficus) or* witch *(strigha).* These are then cast into the flames to the accompaniment of Revelation 19:20-1. With the final benedictions comes the placing of the priest’s stole, symbolizing purification, around the neck of the dispossessed. Here Stampa chooses the vision of the three frogs exiting from the mouths of the Dragon, the Beast, and the false prophet and their association with demonic spirits. And for the actual moment when the garment is tied he turns to Revelation 20 itself and to the central theme of *Satanus ligatus.*[Sb]

The exorcisms of another Italian authority, the Theatine Hilarius Nicuesa, are also sustained by passages from Psalms, Proverbs, the gospels, and Revelation. But one entire sequence, the thirteenth, consists of apocalyptic items, and others are based in part on those verses which reflected the grander struggle for power over evil

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» See, for example, the use made of Lucifer’s fall by Carolo Olivieri, ***Bacillus daemonum, conjurationes malignorum spirituum optimal, el probatae mirabilisque efficaciae, cuius cognitio proprie special adsacerdotem*** (Perugia, 1618), 130-1,135-6,262-4,332.

[M] Kapferer, ***Celebration of Demons,*** 233.

” Eunice Bcyersdorf and J. D. Brady (cds.), zl ***Manual of Exorcism*** (New York, 1975) [trans, and edn. of ***Tratado de exorcismos, muy util para los sacerdotesy ministros de la iglesia, c.*** 1720), 101-2, give the Revelation texts as the source for this adjuration. The same form of words appears in Philip Olivcrius, ***Conjuratio malignorum spirituum in corporibus hominum existentium*** (Venice, 1567), fos. 17*-18', 18’-19’. For comparison with some prc-Tridentine rites, see ***Coniuratio malignorum spirituum in corporibus hominum existentium*** (Venice, n.d. ***[c.*** 1495]), sigs. Aiii’, Aiv’, Aviii’; ***Exorcismo mirabile da dijfare ognisorte deMaleficii: e da carfare li Demonii*** (n.p. [Cremona?], 1520), sigs, biii’, biiii’, bv’, bvii'; and ***Liber sacerdotalis nuperimme ex libris sancte Romani ecclesie*** (Venice, 1537), fos. 331-9, for similar adjurations and threats concerning the lake of fire and sulphur.

st Pietro Antonio Stampa, ***Fuga Satanae. Exorcismus ex sacrarum litterarum fontibus, pioque sacros, ecclesia instituto exhaustus*** (Lyons, 1619), sigs. D3'-F4‘ (faulty pagination).

of which exorcism was a particular aspect—the ‘war in heaven’ of chapter 12 and again the crucial sequence in chapter 20 dealing with the binding of Satan.[57] This was something of a regular pattern. It appears also in *Practica exorcistarum* by the Franciscan theologian Valerio Polidoro, an instruction manual that appeared originally in Padua in 1587 (with the approval of the Paduan Council of Ten) and again in editions of the *Thesaurus exorcismorum.* The sixth of his seven pre-exorcisms contains the procedure for using the stole once the possessing spirit had ‘risen up’. As the priest prepares to arrange it over the left shoulder of the demoniac, he should recite the first three verses of Revelation 20, and on tying it in place should add the words: ‘Just as the holy angel of God, by God’s power, bound the old serpent with a great chain and set a seal upon him, so by the same power I bind thee, reprobate creature, with this sacred stole.’ Again, an entire set of exorcisms proper, the ninth and final set, is to be drawn chapter by chapter from Revelation—the only section of the Bible to be employed wholesale in this way.[58] In Girolamo Menghi’s *Fustis daemonum* (1583), one of the best-known of all manuals, no fewer than five complete exorcism sequences were built in this way on chapters from Revelation.

Many other examples might be given.[59] But as an indication of what devils were up against, here is the opening of Zaccaria Visconti’s recommended formula for the first of three final annihilations to conclude the ritual process of exorcism and bring it to its climax:

> Fly, then, peasant of Tartarus *(rustice Tartareae),* for the day of disaster and misery approaches ... fly, peasant of Tartarus, because even now the Lord sends wonders from the heavens, and it rains blood, fire, and smoky vapours. The sun will be changed into darkness and the moon into blood. The earth will mourn, the heavens will grieve above, and all creatures will give voice, as if in travail, by reason of so great a terror... Fly, peasant of Tartarus, behold the day of storms and clouds, in which you will cry out, ‘O beasts, all of you come, devour me, I cannot bear such torments!’, and you will not be heard. Fly, peasant of Tartarus, behold the day of wrath, when the Lord will whet his sword as [sharp as] lightning, and return to you vengeance for your enmity. He will drench his arrows with your blood, and his sword of justice will devour you and lay waste to you. Fly, peasant of Tartarus, for the time hastens, and the day of ruin approaches ... Fly, peasant of Tartarus.[60]

It was only fitting that the wrathful devil of Revelation 12:12 should be overpowered by the *dies irae* itself. But such apocalyptic warnings did not go unquestioned. The Spanish theologian Raffaelc della Torre complained that it was wrong to depart from the official liturgy by threatening devils with excommunication on pain of their being

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[57] HilariusNicuesa,£xarmwan«m (Venice, 1639), 171-85, see also 92,151,227,341,335.

[58] Valerio Polidoro, ***Practica exorcistarum ...ad daemones et maleficia de Christi fidelibus eiiciendum*** (1587), repr. in ***Thesaurus exorcismorum atqueconjurationum terribilium*** (Cologne, 1626), 42-4,130-8.

[59] See the use of apocalyptic themes in Florian Canale, ***Del modo di conoscer et sanare i maleficiati, et delVantichissimo, et ottimo uso del benedire: Trattati due. A ’ quail sono aggiohte varie congiurationi. et essorcismi contro la tempesta, e cattivi tempi mossi da maligni spirits*** (Brescia, 1648), 128-32 178-80 (first pub. 1614).

[60] Zaccaria Visconti, ***Complementum artis exorcislicae*** (1600), repr. in ***Thesaurus exorcismorum,*** 893.

'cast into the lake of fire for a thousand years'. Revelation 20 referred to a power that could not be appropriated by priests. By the early eighteenth century, exorcisms seem to lack this kind of imagery.[61] Nevertheless, Della Torre exonerated those who did use it on the grounds that it was in such popular demand and thus difficult to resist.[62]

Protestants were, naturally, profoundly suspicious of Catholic exorcists and condemned their rites as magical. Protestant demoniacs were treated by prayers, vigils, and fasts, but because of the lack of a formal liturgy (in England this was prohibited by the 1604 Canons) it is much more difficult to know what was actually said to them and to their devils.[63] Despite all the many recorded instances from Lutheran Germany and Calvinist England (and New England) it is, therefore, impossible to give them any overall scriptural or theological focus. Even so, it is more than a guess to suppose that eschatological sentiments were influential. Protestant pastors held conversations with possessing devils and in the course of one of them in 1565 a Lutheran pastor at Sprembcrg told the spirits they would shortly be bound with 'chains of darkness in the abyss of Hell'.[64] Mclanchthon himself believed that demons might be successfully chased from demoniacs if exorcists invoked the name of Christ and pastors preached publicly 'about the coming judgment by the Son of God (in which the devils' wickedness will be revealed), and about the punishments in store for the devils'.[65] The 13-ycar-old 'boy of Burton', Thomas Darling, who was one of Darrell's demoniacs in the 1590s was read to from John but also from Revelation during the attempts to dispossess him.[66] 'The pride and rage of Sathan', according to one of the preachers attending Mary Glover in 1602, 'was but a token of his ruine not farr of [w].'[67]

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[41] It is altogether lacking in Paolo Maria Cardi, ***Ritualis Romani documenta de exorcizandis obsessis a daemonio comentariis*** (Venice, 1733), who repeats Della Torre's complaint, 113-14.

[42] Della Torre, ***Tractatus de potestate ecclesiae coercendi daemones,*** 176-7, see also 185. For an example of what Della Torre objected to, sec Oliverius, ***Conjuratio malignorum spirituum,*** fos. 19'-20r.

[42] For exceptions, see Swan, ***True and breife report, of Mary Glovers vexation, passim',*** [Melchior Ncukirch],/WrrA/^r ***Christliche gebete, wider die Teujfel in den armenbesessenenleuten (Helmstedt,*** 1596), sigs. B6'-E8' [I am indebted to Erik Midelfort for detailed notes on the contents of this tract]; Johann Conrad Dannhauer, ***Scheid- und Absag-Briejf, Einem ungenanten Priester auss Collen, aujfsein Antworts-Schreiben, an einen seiner vertrawten guten Freunde, fiber das zu Strassburg... vom Teujfel besessene Adeliche Jungfrawlin gegeben*** (Strasburg, 1654), 378-82 (a prayer for the possessed linking the devil's rage to the end of the world), see also 43-4, for Dannhauer's own eschatology of possession.

[w] ***Bericht, wie es umb eine vom Teujfel besessene Frau von Adel in Niederlaussitzgeschaffen, doraus*** [nr] ***des bosen Veindes*** [hr] ***letzter Vleis*** [nr] ***zu vermerken (***1565), repr. in Karl Von Weber, ***Aus vierjahrhunderten. Mittheilungen aus dem Haupt-Staatsarchive zu Dresden*** (NS, 4 vols.; Leipzig, 1857-61), ii, 312; cf. Anon., ***The disclosing of a late count erfey ted possession by the devy I in two may dens within the ci tie ofLondon*** (London, n.d. [1574]), sig. Avii' (cases of Agnes Briggs and Rachel Pindar).

[4S] Cited by Weyer, ***De praestigiis daemonum,*** 470.

[44] [Jesse Bee], ***The most wonderfull and true storie, of a certaine witch named Alse Gooderige of Stapenhill ...As also a true report of the strange torments of Thomas Darling, a boy ofthirteene yeres ofage, that was possessed by the devill, with his horrible fittes and terrible apparitions by him uttered at Burton upon Trent in the countie of Stafford, and of his marvellous deliverance,*** ed.J[ohn] [Denison] (London, 1597), 19; sec also 'To the Reader', sig. A2', where Darling's possession is said to be a 'proof of the prophecy in Revelation 12:12. '

[47] Swan, ***True and breife report,*** 45.

Most remarkable of all was the case of Richard Dugdale, the 'Surcy demoniack' from Lancashire, who was exorcized by the Nonconformist minister John Carrington and his colleagues during 1689 (and later charged with fraud by the Anglican Zachary Taylor). According to the published account of the sessions, Carrington repeatedly taunted the devil in Dugdale with apocalyptic challenges, especially allusions to the vials of wrath and the chainings of Revelation and references to the Last Judgement, to which the devil reacted with rage and Dugdale with terrible shrieks and convulsions. When the devil admitted, with an involuntary sense of his own historical limitations, that his time was short, Carrington exclaimed: 'What Satan! Dost thou say thy time of staying in this World is but short? Hark, hark, Dost not thou hear the last Trump sounding a dreadful Call, summoning all Devils to the last day of Judgment?' Later he added, 'hast not thou heard the News, so sad and fatal... to thee, that the great day of the Lord is near?', and quoted the verses from Zephaniah 1 that spoke of imminent calamities and final reckonings, and the key passage from Revelation 20: 'Mark! mark! Satan, dost not thou see the Angel coming down from Heaven, "Having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand..." ' etc. Dugdale duly vomited a paper that referred to 'the time when the Lord would plunge him in the Lake of burning'; and at one point Carrington formally adjured the devil to depart, 'as thou shalt answer me at the great day of Judgment, where thou shalt have Judgment without Mercy, if thou will not be gone from him'. Clearly there was no bar to the use, among some Protestant communities, of exorcisms as elaborately figured as anything in the apocalyptic language of the Catholic manuals.[68]

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The assumption behind rites of exorcism was that the power to cause events was a matter for competition—whether these events took place in the bodies of demoniacs, in the 'body' of the visible Church and during its rituals, or in the course of Christian history seen as a whole. This explains the constant intermeshing, in all the materials we have been considering (whether Protestant or Catholic), of three considerations—first, the treatment of individual demoniacs; secondly, the status of the true church as a repository of the exorcistic powers proffered in the gospels as legitimating signs (Mark 16:17: 'And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils'); and thirdly, the idea that history was, from first to last, a demonomachy. Commentators have tended to account somewhat insensitively for the relationship between the first and second as if it was merely a question of propaganda. Of the third ingredient they have said nothing. Yet the use of apocalyptic scriptures must have considerably enhanced even the purely instrumental efficacy of exorcism. Carolo Olivieri Viccntino, official exorcist at S. Ubaldi in Perugia, started one of his conjurations with the classic verses from Daniel 7, on the grounds that

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[u] [Thomas Jolly ***et al.], The Surcy demoniack; or, an account of Solans strange and dreadful actings, in and about the body of Richard Dugdale of Surcy*** (London, 1697), ***passim*** esp. 19,33-4. For an account of the case and the debates it aroused, see David Harley, 'Mental Illness, Magical Medicine and the Devil in Northern England, 1650-1700', in Roger French and Andrew Wear (eds.), ***The Medical Revolution of the Seventeenth Century*** (Cambridge, 1989), 131-44.

‘devils greatly fear these sacred words.’ In 1628, the 13-year-old demoniac Pierre Crcuse of Niort himself fought off the devil with the challenge, ‘I do not fear you at all, you would not dare, has not God chained you up for a thousand years?’ And in Boston in 1688 the parents of Martha and John Goodwin refused to oppose the demons inside their children with anything ‘but Prayers and Tears, unto Him that has the chaining of them’.[69] In effect, exorcism was associated with a metahistorical struggle for power of which the outcome was not in doubt; and in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries this outcome was expectantly awaited.

At the same time, the idea that the end of the world (and the end of the devil) was imminent added an important symbolic dimension. It was an eschatological commonplace to suppose that the whole course of human affairs could be found in Revelation. To make this text the basis of entire ritual sequences was to make possession and its treatment a replica of history seen from this point of view; while to cite repeatedly the verses of chapter 20 was to make exorcism a symbolic enactment of the promises they contained. This in turn had important implications for the question of legitimacy, with which Revelation—since it traced the historical fortunes of the true church—was also manifestly concerned. For Lutherans, Catholics, and even Nonconformists, and for some Calvinists like John Darrell and his collaborator George More, successfully performing exorcisms demonstrated that their faith was indeed bona fide. Performing them in an eschatological spirit reinforced the point. According to William Whiston, writing in the 1730s, the power of exorcism had been preserved for dealing with the Antichrist; now that the Papacy was about to fall, ‘those gifts will be restored again’.[70] At a moment in time when Babylon and Jerusalem were about to receive their ultimate deserts, binding the inhabitants of one (Revelation 18: 2) in the name of the other was, so to speak, a pre-echo of the Last Judgement. It was a Catholic bishop, Friedrich Forner of Bamberg, who commented on the fact that, whereas all the Church’s other formal orations ended with the words *per Dominum nostrum Jesttm Christum,* exorcisms alone were concluded: *per eum qui venturus est iudicare vivos, et morluous, et saeculum per ignem.* In the first, he wrote, the clergy implored the help of the Father through the love of the Son; in the second, they warned the devil to fly in the face of the final decrees.[71]

Eschatology, then, was one possible symbolic framework for possession and exorcism—a kind of cultural model for interpreting the behaviour of demoniacs and their priestly healers. But did the symbolizing process move in the other direction too? If

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[0] Olivieri, ***Baculus daemonum,*** 372; /\non., ***Histoire admirable de la maladieprodigieusede Pierre Crease, arriveeen la title de Niort*** (Niort, 1630), 58; Mather, ***Memorable providences,*** 102.

[70] William Whiston, ***An account of the daemoniacks and of the power of casting out daemons*** (London, 1737),67. For Whiston’smillcnarian beliefs, sec id., ***Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. William Whiston*** (2vols.; London, 1753), ii. 142-216 (‘Of the horrid Wickedness of the present Age, highly deserving such terrible Judgments’), and the commentary in James E. Force, ***William Whiston: Honest Newtonian*** (Cambridge, 1985), 113-19.

[71] Forner, ***Panoplia armaturae Dei,*** 193; cf. Del Rio, ***Disquisilionum magicarum,*** 512 (nothing terrifies the demons more than the recollection of the last judgement, when they will all be thrust into everlasting torment’). Both cite Micrologus, ***De ecclesiasticis observationibus,*** ch. 7. Sec also Franz, ***Kirchlichen Benediktionem,*** ii. 535.

apocalyptic history helped to make sense of possession and exorcism, did they help in providing idioms for depicting society in the last times? To find this happening would surely confirm the idea that in early modern Europe concepts of spirit possession and concepts of history were related intrinsically and not simply by coincidence. We have seen Daniel Schaller broadening the idea of possession beyond the physical sphere to include the seizure of the hearts and souls of men and women—a point made by many of his German contemporaries. Schaller's account of the results was comprehensive enough to embrace the entire spectrum of errors in belief and laxity in behaviour.[71] [72] The Tudor physician and moralist, Andrew Boorde, subsumed all immorality, but especially swearing, under the category of possession, while Cranmer, in his catechism, made exorcism a pictorial emblem for the Lord's Prayer petition 'Deliver us from evil.'[73] Just over a century later, in a sermon on Revelation 12: 12, the English millenarian Nathaniel Homes argued that the devil had 'come down in great wrath' into Interregnum England, one of his aims being to possess men and women. But for Homes too the idea of possession embraced behaviour in general: 'Thus in these dayes crowds of wicked wretches, blasphemers, inhumane imps, impious by horrid principles, ascend their increment and gradation of ungodliness, till they appear to us no otherwise than as possessed.'[74] We will shortly see this pattern repeated in the writings of Jean Le Normant, who thought that the French body politic itself had become occupied by demonic heresy and disaffection.

The possessed, then, like the mad and the foolish, could become emblems, with the whole world reduced to their condition. The best and fullest illustration of this theme returns us, finally, to the work of the Calvinist Pierre Virct, and specifically to the last six dialogues of his *Le monde à I'empire et le monde demoniacle.* The whole treatise is an essay on global decay and it draws together much of the eschatology of the sixteenth century. The fact that it should have as its eventual focus the notion of possession is, therefore, highly significant. But what Virct does is to carry over this idea from the physical to the social sphere. His subject is not so much the demoniac as 'the Demoniacke worlde', and the possession of individuals is only important as a kind of key for the analysis of the collective possession of mankind as history draws to its close. Following a dialogue on the general theme of 'the devill let loose', Viret therefore takes examples of the demons cast out by Christ and reads into them complex metaphors of the evils of the last times.

The most furious and unconstrained behaviour, especially superhuman strength, had been due to 'black devils' and this suggests to him the most violent forms of disorder caused by persecutors and the might of tyrants in later history and in contemporary Europe. The fact that, in Matthew 8:28, the two demoniacs came 'out of the tombs' links them with death and shows the deadness of the spiritual lives of the wicked. The occasions when 'white devils' mockingly acknowledged Christ through the mouths of demoniacs by complaining that he was tormenting them tell Viret about the general features of modern pseudo-worship and religious hypocrisy among those who conform only when the situation suits them. Catholicism, for example, is 'white' devilry because it resists the true faith but in the name of religion. Somewhat similar were the wiles of the devils (Mark 3: 11) who tried to compromise Christ by giving him his proper titles, or the devil in possession of the sorcerers of Philippi (Acts 16:16-18) who spuriously acknowledged Paul to be a servant of God. Here too Viret found parallels in the stances taken up by his sixteenth-century opponents. Finally, there were the 'lunatike Devils' who gained access to the bodies of New Testament demoniacs by taking advantage of disease or conditions like deafness and blindness; so, too, devils in the last times would take advantage of vices and spiritual unheedfulness to work their mischiefs.

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[71] Schaller, ***Herolt,*** sigs. Ni'-Nii'. Cf. Ellinger, //««, ***Coppel,*** 41-4; Ambrosius Taurer, ***Hochnotvendigster Bench', von mancherlcyerschrecklichenWunderzeichenundBussriiffeni, dieunsvonftirslehen den Vorendrungen und Strajfen, wind von nahem Ende der Welt gar Augenscheinlich undgreifflich Predigen*** (Halle, 1592), sig. Fi' (in the context of insistently apocalyptic warnings).

[71] Boorde, ***Breviary ofhelthe,*** fos. iv'-vii'; Cranmer, ***Cathechismus,*** fo. cci'.

[74] Nathaniel Homes, ***Plain dealing, or the cause and cure of the present evils of the times*** (London, 1652), 78-9; the sermon was given before the Lord Mayor of London, and dedicated, in print, to the aidermen, recorder, and sheriffs of the city.

It is, of course, true that Viret's enthusiasm for this kind of demonology was fired by the needs of polemic, and that in consequence many of these dialogues dwell on the major issues of the Reformation (the nature of the ministry, the role of the magistrate, the validity of tradition, and so on). But this, in itself, suggests the degree of significance that could be attached to a subject like possession and the range of meanings associated with it. In this respect, Viret's Calvinism is a crucial matter. For Calvinists were the least likely of Europe's major denominations to take contemporary cases of possession seriously. Viret is no exception to this; all his examples are taken from the gospels and from Acts, and he makes some very typical denunciations of Catholic exorcism as itself a form of demonic conjuration. Yet he still chooses the concept of being possessed as the central organizing principle of his treatise, and he still describes the remedies (in the final dialogue) in the language of exorcism. Naturally, it is Christ who becomes the only true exorcist, driving out devils at the same moment as he enters people's hearts and lives. In keeping with the rest of his argument, Viret associates the real dispossession of the world with stronger faith and better behaviour on the part of all its inhabitants: 'all the Priestes, Friers, and Charmers Conjurations, and all the Conjurers that be in the worlde, will litle or nothing avayle, without there be some other helping hand then theirs.'[75]

It was not necessary, therefore, to be as deeply involved in the literal manifestations of possession as were Catholics in early modern Europe to think of the subject as a vital one. Its importance for Viret, as for many others in this period, could also stem from its unique ability to symbolize the state of a world in terminal decline. This is not to say that the literal aspects of the behaviour become irrelevant; on the contrary, Viret scrutinizes them closely for symbolic clues. Indeed, his treatise is a yet further example of the way even the wildest physical manifestations of possession could yield perfectly plausible meanings. The raging of demoniacs might be emblematic of the deeds of particular persecutors and tyrants; but as in the case of Lutheran eschatology it also signified the tribulations of an entire age:

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[75] Viret, ***Worlde possessed with devils,*** sig. Gvi'.

> Nowc, wee see that the like of this falleth out dayly, we see how the Divel troubleth and tormen tc th the worlde, especially in those places, out of which hee knoweth he shall be caste. For, he then falleth into such a rage, as that a man woulde thinke that the Gospell, by which meane Jesus Christe will cast him out, had set open all the gates of Hell, to let out all the legions of Divcls that were in it. For, then hee fretteth and fumeth, and maketh as manie as he hath power over, to fret and fume."’[76]

Here, once more, the physical symptoms of possession, its demonic causation, and its moral and social significance are brought indivisibly together under the conceptual umbrella of eschatological history.

[76] Virct, ***H'orlde possessed with devils,*** sig. Hvii’".

28

Before Loudun

The words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

(Daniel 12:9)

Harken and be attentive, the houre of that great day of Judgement is at hand, for Antichrist is borne and brought forth some moneths past by a Jewish woman. God will rase out Magick and al Magicians, and witches shall returne home unto him: the Soveraigne high Priest shall give them plenary absolution, and all their complices shall be laid open unto the world.... I foretell you these things by the appointment of the holy Ghost, all which is true, I beare but the name thereof, and the Church shall heereafter admit it as a Revelation. God would prevent the Divel, and therefore he doth cause this annunciation to be made, that the day of Judgement is at hand, and that Antichrist is borne.

(The demon Verin speaking through Louise Capeau, 27 Dec. 1610; Sebastien Michaelis, *Admirable histoire*)

As an epilogue to both the subject of possession and the whole question of the historical thinking associated with witchcraft beliefs it may be helpful to look closely at two cases where eschatology became integral to the reported behaviour of demoniacs. Since they predate the much analysed affair at Loudun, considering them will have the merit of redressing an imbalance in the attention paid to the history of possession in early modern France. They have the further advantage of involving witchcraft; and, above all, they show that the coming of the Antichrist could be just as urgent a matter for Catholics as for Protestants, despite the view that for the former this was a far more muted concern. Both are episodes of the type for which France eventually became notorious, involving the wholesale possession and exorcism of communities of female religious. And both are rather remarkable for the fact that in the course of them the Antichrist was supposed to have made a personal appearance.

The first case concerned the Ursuline convent at Aix-en-Provence and led to the trial and execution (in April 1611) of Louis Gaufridy, priest of the parish of the Accoules in Marseilles. The chief investigators were Sebastien Michaelis, who at the time was prior of the neighbouring Dominican community at Saint-Maximin, and another Dominican, Francois Doncieux (Domptius). Michaelis was an energetic reformer of his order and became both its vicar-general and the founder of its new Parisian community in 1613. He had already been involved in witch trials in the 1580s, and in 1587 had published a tract on demons and witchcraft called *Pneumalogie: Discours des esprits.* Doncieux was a theologian from the university of Louvain. In 1613 the two men issued an account of the exorcisms of Gaufridy's victims which they dedicated to the Queen Regent Marie de Medici, entitled *Histoire admirable de la possession d'ttne penitente.* In terms of the intensity and complexity of the public debates aroused, this affair was easily overshadowed by the later possessions at Loudun and Louviers. It is significant, none the less, for establishing a new pattern of relationships of which the later cases were in essence only modifications—in particular, the attribution of the collective possession of nuns to the *maleficium* of priest-magicians who had hitherto been their spiritual guardians. The charges against Gaufridy originated in the accusations of one of his Ursuline penitents, Madeleine Demandols de La Palud. She alleged that he had sexually enchanted her (the devil had given his breath aphrodisiacal qualities), inducted her into witchcraft, and taken her to sabbats. Eventually she was physically invaded by demons who refused to leave until Gaufridy was ‘converted, or dead, or else punished by justice’.[1]

Many of the exorcisms that eventually followed had the effect of turning these demons into sermonizers. In several long addresses, Verin, the spirit possessing another Ursuline, Louise Capeau, extolled the virtues of obedience in religious vocations and defended the central elements of Catholic faith. He discoursed on the doctrine of Purgatory, on the Immaculate Conception, on the meaning of the Crucifixion, on the practice of the sacraments, and, echoing the themes of previous public exorcisms in France, on the Host and the Real Presence. This reversal of demonic behaviour was so remarkable and sustained that it was said to offer a novel and uniquely potent opportunity for the conversion of souls. But its significance was said to stem, above all, from its timing. For this was not merely another saving miracle, but God’s final and decisive invitation to sinners. Speaking through the girl on 27 December 1610 (appropriately the feast of St John the Evangelist), Verin made his announcement of the Apocalypse. In a summary of the customary *vita* of the Antichrist, Verin added that he would demand adulation and attract the fawning worship of the great. The supreme deception in the claim to be Christ would result in his unmasking, overthrow, and destruction.[2]

The Gaufridy case became well known in seventeenth-century France, largely through popularizing accounts of the possession of his female followers and his own trial and confession. With him went a reputation for antichristianism. Beelzebub, the principal occupant of Madeleine Demandols, admitted that he was only one among 6,660 possessing devils, a total that could easily be made to match the numerology of the Beast in Revelation 13? Moreover, a principal reason for Gaufridy’s actual convuv.cn A-i> the discovery on ni> body ot demonic mirks—insensitive areas that. icco.K.^.5 .0 cemonoloi^cd theory. were actually acquired during the formal pact wiJi Sxtan blit which signified a more general allegiance to the cause of the AntiuhriSk. L w^> Michaelis s view that they alone were a sufficient indication of guilt, since they were only ever found on magicians and witches. They were indeed marks 0* the Beas: and they singled out the reprobate from those servants of God who were sealed by angels in an earlier chapter of Revelation. The local doctors involved in the examinations ot the possessed and accused appear to have agreed. One 01 them w as Jacques F ontaine. counsellor and physician in ordinary to the kin?, and professor in the medical faculty at Aix. In 1611 he published a short study of the medical aspects ot the case in which he argued that the marks were the most certain proofs ot witchcraft. The devil always identified his disciples in this way with stigmata, he never did so without their consent, and the physical blemishes that resulted could always be distinguished from naturally produced abnormalities. Christ singled out his followers with a divine and spiritual impress, and it was the Antichrist's aim to parody this by adopting the demonic, and crudely physical, equivalent.[4]

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[1] Michaelis, ***Admirable historic,*** 339, see also 365. Michaelis’s is the fullest contemporary account, but see also Anon., ***Confession faicle parmessire Louys Gaufridi***... d ***deux feres capucinsdu convent dAix... It H' Avril 1611*** (Aix-en-Provence, 1611), and Anon., ***The life and death of Lewis Gaufredy ■ a priest of the church of theAccoules in Marseilles in France*** (London, 1612). For modern accounts, none ofwhich deals with the eschatological ingredients, see Mandrou, ***Magistrals et sorciers,*** 198-210; Walker, ***Unclean Spirits,*** 75-7; **[illegible]ean L[illegible]rédan, *U[illegible] and P[illegible]*** [illegible] ***siècle:*** [illegible] ***1670)*** [illegible] ***aris,*** [illegible] ***“ Madeleine de DemanJoIx***

[2] Michaelis, ***Admirable historic,*** 260-70.

[1] For similar numerology, see the possession in 1589 of Hans Schmidt of Heidingsfeld near Wurzburg, in Joannes Schnabel and Simon Marius, ***Warhajftige und erschrockliche Geschicht, welcliesich***

It w as Beelzebub who also related how Gaufridy had hoped himself to engender the Antichrist by deflowering witches at sabbats, an ambition which, as the devils had to point out to him, only revealed 'his ignorance of the Scripture'. He had also asked 'whether hee could not live till the comming of Antichrist to assist him, and to whet his rage and malice against Jesus Christ'. Again he was reminded of the theologically correct position and told that this was outside demonic control. But at least the priest-magician was undisputed leader of the community into w hich the Antichrist had been born and in which antichristianism would reach its historical climax. Beelzebub's advice (itself somewhat dubious in theology') wras that 'hee should comfort himselfe in this, that he did as great injuries to Jesus Christ, as Antichrist himselfe should bee able to doe and greater too.' Even Gaufridy's language reflected this; when he swore by the 'mother of God' or spoke of'John the Baptist', these were taken to be coded references to the mother of the Antichrist and the devil. These details were certainly emphasized by Michaelis but they were given much wider publicity in an account of the Aix-en-Provence affair in the frequently reprinted collections of *Histoires tragiques de tiostre temps* compiled by Francois de Rossct. Rossct commented that if Verin had indeed told the truth, then the world was nearly at an end. In any case, it was impossible that God would allow such gross impieties to continue for much longer. The *Histoires tragiques* were enormously popular in the seventeenth century; one wonders just how many readers came to share Rossct's astonishment that God had not destroyed humanity already.[5]

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nendicher Zeit zugetragen hat, mil einemjungen Handtwercks und Schmidtsgesetten, Hansen Schmidt genandt (Wurzburg, 1589), sig. Cii*.

[4] Michaelis, ***Admirable historic.*** 311,378; Fontaine, ***Des marques des sorciers.*** 4-20.

[1] Michaelis, ***Admirable historic.*** 356, 379; Rossct, ***Histoires tragiques.*** 43-85, csp. 73, 77-8 (and see 247-64 443-65 ' for other narratives of demonism and witchcraft). On the huge success of this work and its many editions, sec Sergio Poli, 'J.es ***Histoires tragiques*** de F. de Rossel, oil De la contradiction', ***XVII⁹ Siecte*** 35 (1983), 333-46. In 1622, Remy Richard remarked that the Gaufridy case was so well known, *quc

The second group of witches to witness to the Antichrist's coming belonged to a newly founded community of Brigidines in early seventeenth-century Lille. Seemingly remote from those of the Provencal demoniacs, their experiences were nevertheless linked to them, first through the presence, again, of the exorcist Doncieux, and then in the writings ofjean Le Normant. His *Histoire veritable et memorable de ce qui c 'est passe sous 'I exorcisme de trois jilles possedees espais de Flandre* appeared in Paris in 1623 in two parts (and also in Latin). In the first of these there is a long account of revelations of witchcraft among the Brigidines drawn from a series of exorcisms performed in 1613 by Doncieux and a Franciscan assistant. Le Normant also claims to have consulted Nicholas de Montmorency, count of Destarrc and minister of finance to the archdukes, who seems to have been involved in the case as a representative of the governing regime. Part 2 of the work repeats in detail the story of the proceedings at Aix, of which the Lille case is seen as a continuation, and draws many parallels between the two episodes. Above all, they are linked by an eschatology which focuses on the arrival of the Antichrist in France.[6]

The *Histoire* opens with the confessions of Marie de Sains and Simone Dourlet, both accused of witchcraft by the devils in possession of the three demoniacs—Catherine, Pcronnc, and Fran^oise—who were the subject of the exorcisms. The two nuns had allegedly become clients of Satan, committed many crimes, especially infanticides, and taken prominent part, one as 'princess of magic', in a number of spectacular sabbats—in fact, the Gaufridy sabbats. Le Normant's account of these rites is remarkable for its detail; it is among the most circumstantial of any of the descriptions of demonic assemblies in early modern witchcraft writings. The entire repertoire of Catholic sacramental rituals and objects had (supposedly) been mocked, blasphemed, or otherwise misappropriated for demonic purposes. The Host and the consecrated wine, as well as the normal crucifix, had suffered 'injuries', psalms had been sung in honour of devils, Gaufridy (the 'prince of the sabbat') had acted as a spurious confessor, and so on. Individual meetings were given particular themes—on Thursdays sodomy, on Saturdays bestiality, etc. Le Normant included particulars of the order of the ceremonies, the feasting, singing, and dancing, and the types of promises made and contracts concluded. The evidence was so full that he was able to report the contents of entire liturgies, with appropriate prayers and readings and complete texts of the sermons preached by the devils. These were not, like the utterances forced against his will from Verin, edifying discourses; they were the sort of things devils were expected to say. Nor were the accused treated as the Ursulines and allowed to continue their religious vocations, once recovered from demonism; like Gaufridy they were convicted and burned.[7]

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les pctits enfants dorcscnavant cn vont a la moustarde*, ***Admirable vertu dessaincts exorcismes,*** 386, see also 364-5.

[6] Mandrou, ***Magistrals et sorciers,*** 209—10, mentions the case briefly, wrongly attributing the ***Histoire veritable*** to Michaelis. Commentary in Alain Lottin, £///e, ***citadelle de la Contre-Reforme (1598-1668)*** (Dunkirk, 1984), 165-86.

[7] Le Normant, ***Histoire veritable et memorable de ce qui e'est passe sous I'exorcisme de trois Jilles possedees ds pats de Flandre, en la descouverte et confession de Marie de Sains, soy disant princesse de la magic, et Simone***

Of all the ceremonies in which they were alleged to have participated, the most imposing was a *rite de passage*—a nativity festival for the Antichrist. Between 19 and 24 June 1613, the demoniacs made twelve successive disclosures dealing with his birth and advent, all of them confirmed by the testimony of the two accused. At first they spoke of the annunciations of his arrival and his parentage. They confirmed that his mother was indeed a Jewess and his father a devil—Beelzebub. As an infant he was already *enragé*. His baptism, presided over by Gaufridy (with the witches as godmothers) had been held on the feast of John the Baptist to symbolize the homage that his own precursors, the magicians, would eventually grant him. During the ceremony he was duly named as God the Creator and received as the true Messiah. Later the demoniacs described the celebratory masses held in his honour, again with complete liturgies and actual texts. A Gloria in praise of Lucifer opened by thanking him for bringing the new God into the world, ‘so much longed for, so much wished for, who was promised from all eternity’. In a Canticle the entire sabbat addressed the Antichrist as God of heaven and earth: *Tu es Deus caeli atque terrae.* We are even told that the Antichrist gave his thanks and promised rewards for his followers. The festivities closed with a general acclamation: ‘Long live the new God, who has come into the world and who bears such a glorious name.’[8]

There are some startling and very concrete inversions in these rites, as befitted the cult of Christ’s supreme adversary. It was particularly appropriate, for instance, that the chasuble worn during the nativity masses should be without the cross and have the figure of the Beast on it instead. What is notable in the present context are the demonic and magical features of the Antichrist’s coming reign, summarized on 23 June in the eighth exorcism of the series. Devils would preach the arrival of the new ‘Christ’, claiming that more would accept him than received the true Christ and destroying those few martyrs who nevertheless refused to do so. The Antichrist would appear as a king and ‘all the magicians in that time will come as well and serve him so that they may indulge their fury against the Christians.’ He would overthrow the Church, Rome, and the Papacy, abolish the mass, set up sacrificial worship in his own name, and thereby revive heresy and idolatry. Magicians would teach that all the vices were in fact virtues, command that God be blasphemed, and exercise great cruelty against priests and other godly men. The Jews would flock to the Antichrist and children would be sacrificed. Finally, prodigies and demonic miracles would abound—the raising of the dead, the healing of the sick, the bringing of fire from the heavens, the causing of statues to speak in reply to men, and, eventually, the ascension of the Antichrist himself.[9]

These particular exorcisms concluded with a claim that was implicit to them all—that of the two beasts mentioned in Revelation 8, the first (with seven heads) was Lucifer and the second the Antichrist. Later in his account, Le Normant pointed out that just as the coming of Christ had been revealed to the Gentiles and to the Magi,

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Dourltt complice, et autres. Ou ilest aussi traictede la police du sabbat, et secrets de la synagogue des magiciens et magiciennes. De L'Ant echrist, et de la fin du monde, yt. 1,1-71.

• Ibid. 72-116.

’ Ibid. 92,100-4.

so the coming of the Antichrist was fittingly known to seventeenth-century magicians, and through the announcements not of the heavens but of hell. Since he must come at the end of the world, the exorcisms at Lille were in effect an annunciation of the eschaton, a part of the final accomplishment of scriptural promises. Earlier in June it was said that the warnings of Isaiah 10 (directed at the King of Assyria, a figure of the devil) were about to be fulfilled. On 19 June the demoniacs identified their actions with one of the trumpets of the Last Judgement and spoke of the coming together of St John, Moses, and the two prophets Elias and Enoch. The next day they stated that 'all that which is written in the Apocalypse would come.' On other occasions their pronouncements dwelt on the themes of cumulative sinfulness, inescapable reckoning, and ultimate dissolution, a sequence in which the idea of the Antichrist was necessary to every stage. It was even revealed that God would have exterminated mankind for its sins already but for the intercession of the blessed saints and the Virgin Mary, for whom the exposure and conversion of magicians and witches at Lille offered a last possibility of human salvation.[10]

As if this was not evidence enough of their eschatological significance, Le Normant added to the disclosures of 1613 the later testimony of one further Brigidine, Didyme, who in March and April of 1617 confessed to having participated in the same witchcraft and seen the Antichrist at the same sabbats. In three other cases from 1618,1619, and 1621, all from unspecified sources and locations, he claimed to have found further proof that witches had witnessed to the birth of the Antichrist and his reception as 'Mignon de la Synagogue'. And to emphasize the conclusion still more he reprinted the material from Michaelis's account of the Gaufridy affair, including the apocalyptic speeches of Verin. Towards the end of the *Histoire veritable* the cases at Aix and at Lille are regarded, for eschatological purposes, as one.[11]

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In addition to its function as an ecclesiastical ritual, exorcism was the purest and most rewarding form taken by demonological enquiry. For under its direct threat demons were expected to reveal important truths about their activities that scholars would never otherwise have discovered. But that they were in fact truths was a claim that had to be defended.[12] Michaelis readily conceded (following John 8:44) that left to his own devices the devil was indeed the 'father of lies'. He insisted none the less that faced with 'the efficacy of the name of God' he could no longer dissemble—just as the possessing devils in Mark 5 had pronounced their true names

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” Le Normant, ***Histoire veritable et memorable,*** 115-61, 257-61, 321 (mispagination), 351-60, 82, 303-14.
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" Ibid. 2nd pagination, 1-346. The Gaufridy materials begin pt. 2 of the work, entitled ***De La Vocation des magiciens el magiciennes par le ministre des demons: et particulierement des chefs de Magic: a sf avoir de Magdelaine de la Palud. Marie de Sains. Louys Gaufridy. Simone Dourlet, etc. Item. De la vocation accomplic par I 'entremise de la seule authorite Eccles, a scavoirde Didyme, Maberthe, Louyse, etc., Avec troispetits traitez. 1. Des merveilles de cel oeuvre. 2. De la conformite avec les sanctes Escrites. et S. S. Peres etc. 3. De la puissance Eales, sur les demons.***

[12] For the general theological debate on the issue, see Marc Venard, 'Le Demon controversiste', in Michel Pcronnet (ed.), ***La Contravene religieuse (xvr-xtx- siecles)*** (2 vols.; Montpellier, 1980), ii. 45-60.

at Christ's command. Besides, the enormous distance between what was admitted under exorcism at Aix and what was normal in demonism—the very extent of the contrast—was itself an authentication of the proceedings. When Le Normant came to defend his *Histoire veritable* against criticism from the academics of the Sorbonne, he too had to satisfy doubts about the propriety of listening to demons. And, like Michaëlis, he replied by stressing the overwhelming authority of properly conducted exorcisms and by examining what was revealed both for its intrinsic plausibility and for the way it might (in these two episodes at least) be externally corroborated by reference to eschatological truths. Contemporaries did, therefore, express scepticism on this point (and increasingly came to do so) but these two Catholic authors cannot be said to have been unduly discomfited by their arguments. Given that there was no cause to abandon exorcism altogether as a piece of ecclesiastical weaponry, there was certainly no sense in going on to admit that it might not after all be powerful enough against a really stubborn devil. 'We ought not to beleeve the Divell', was Michaëlis's working rule, 'yet when hee is compelled to discourse and relate a truth, then wee should feare and tremble, for it is a token of the wrath of God.'[13]

Our problem all along, however, has been that of accounting for what was said on such occasions. To resort at this point to an explanation in terms of the pathology of the behaviour seems hopelessly inadequate, so closely do the details we have just heard conform to the cultural model of possession we have been examining. This is not to deny that considerable pressures must often have been brought to bear on demoniacs to make the sort of statements thought to be appropriate (on cultural grounds, it must still be said) to possessed persons. In Provence and at Lille the eschatological expectations of the exorcists undoubtedly helped to fashion the testimony that was eventually secured. The same is in part true of the confessions of the implicated witches. It is noticeable, for instance, that the Brigidine nun Didyme was pestered for specific disclosures regarding Louis Gaufridy, only to reply that anything further would be merely the product of her imagination. She admitted to having heard details of his case when someone read her the narrative of it and to speaking of the Antichrist 'because a certain very famous preacher of the Company of Jesus preached to us on an occasion that the Antichrist was already born'. It was not even the case after all that she had seen the Antichrist at a sabbat, although such was the conformity between her confession and the others in this case that it, rather than her revocation of it, was taken to be the truth.[14] As in witchcraft trials generally, this sort of disclosure certainly throws us back from accused to accusers—in this case from exorcized to exorcizers—but it does not necessarily impugn either the sincerity of the latter or the cogency of their views. The burden of explanation recedes from the individual confession and falls on the more general circumstances in which Jesuits could intelligibly deliver sermons devoted to visions of the last days and Dominicans could legitimately expect demoniacs and witches to confirm that they had in fact arrived.

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[13] Michaelis, ***/ldmirab/e historic,*** 'To the Reader*, sigs. A3*-A5', C7', see also 102; Jean Le Normant, ***Remonstrances du sieur de Chiremont à messieurs de Sorbonne*** (n.p., dated 1 Jan. 1623), 13-15; cf. id., ***Seconds remonstrances du sieur de Chirement, à messieurs de Sorbonne*** (n.p., dated 31 Jan. 1623).

[14] Le Normant, ***Histoire veritable,*** pt. 2,144,169,172,274.

It has been the purpose of the whole of the present section of this book to suggest what these circumstances were. As a result, episodes like those at Aix and Lille should no longer look like merely the fruits of exotic fancies. Amongst French Catholics there was certainly no lack of interest in the last days and, according to Denis Crouzet, often an obsession with their imminence—to which he attributes the great turbulence of French religious affairs in the sixty years prior to the execution of Gaufridy. Nor can there by any doubt that the figure of the Antichrist acted as a focus. For the most part this was the product of reflections on the coming of Protestant heresy. This is seen in the 1550s and 1560s in the remarks of men like Richard Roussat, Gabriel Du Preau, Jacques Gremond, Gabriel de Saconay, and Francois de Belleforcst,[15] and it was a theme of many of the occasional works of polemic written between 1546 and 1574 by the controversialist Artus Desire.[16] Something of a summation of the view that Protestantism contained all the marks of the Antichrist was achieved in Claude Caron’s bulky tract *L'Antechrist demasque,* published atTournon in 1589. But that it was still very much alive in the decade before the Aix-en-Provence affair can be seen from the Jesuit-inspired writings of‘the simple peasant woman’ Didiere Gillct and the *Advertissement* of Perrieres-Varin.[17] At the same time French Catholic authors pointed to a general association between the flourishing of witchcraft and the coming of the Antichrist—from Node, Masse, and Benoist in the 1570s to Henri Boguet, Jude Serclicr, and Vincent Pons in the 1600s.[18] If to this is added the impact of works originating in other circumstances yet applied to French conditions, then the general currency of the themes that emerged during the exorcisms at Aix and Lille seems yet more probable. The *Dentonslralio de Christo et Antichristo* of St Hippolytus was published in a translated version in Paris in 1579. This was said to have been encouraged by an official of a religious house at Chelles, near Paris, where the work was highly valued by certain ‘virtuous and pious women’.” In 1599 appeared the French version of the eschatological sermons of Francesco Panigarola, on which Le Normant was soon to depend, and in 1616 came

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” Roussat, *Livre d’estat el mutation des temps,* 163-72; for Du Preau, see above Ch. 22; Jacques Gremond, *La Prophetic de S.Jehan Pevangeliste aujourd'huy accomplie pariesfaux prophetes* (Paris, 1567), *passim;* Saconay, *Providence de Dieu sur les roys de France,* 18, 160-1; Francois de Belleforcst, *Discours des presages et miracles advenuz en la personne duroyet parmy la France, des le commencement de son regne* (Lyons, 1568), fo. 4', see also 2. Many other examples in Crouzet, *Guerriers de Dieu,* i. *passim.*

“ I have consulted the following: Artus Desire, *Miroirdesfrancs Taulpins;* id., *Les Grands Joursduparlement de Dieu ...outous chrestienssont adjournez a comparaistre en personne pour respondre sur les grands blasphemes, tromperies el deceptions du regne quisont les terribles et merveilleux signes de I ’Antechrist* (Rouen, 1551); id., *Instruction chrestienne contre les execrables blasphemes et blasphemateurs du nom de Dieu et autres pechez qui regnent d present. Plus les merveilleuses et admirables revelations que Saint Jean cut en 1 'He de Pathmos, selon le texte de /'Apocalypse* (Lyons, 1558); id., *Singeriedes Huguenots,* fos. 22M

[17] Gillet, *Subtile et naifve recherche de I'heresie;* Perrieres-Varin, *Advertissement a tous chrestiens;* cf. id., *Sommaire des secrets de C/ipocalypse,*

[11] Details in Ch. 21 above.

” Hippolytus, *Fray discours du regne de l’Antechrist, de la consummation du monde, des miseres, cl* the translation of Maldonado’s apocalyptic demonology of 1570. When Le Normant’s own book on the Lille affair appeared, it was welcomed by Cornelius Jansenius as confirmation of the birth of the Antichrist.[20]

If the connecting link between this more general climate of Catholic opinion and the utterances of the possessed at Aix and Lille is to be sought in the personal views of Michaëlis and Le Normant, then it is with their other writings that we ought to conclude. In fact, Michaëlis’s *Pneumalogie* is a very good example of what happened when the traditional topics of witchcraft theory were seen in an eschatological framework. The revolt in heaven had made all of history a matter of ‘contrariety and warre betweene the wills of good and bad spirits, and betweene good and bad men also’. The personal history of the devil conformed to this same pattern of events. In a gloss on Revelation 20, Michaëlis explained that, confined by the death and passion of Christ, his full powers would be restored ‘in the last daies of the world ... when Antichrist shall bee borne’. He would ‘powre foorth all his rage and venome upon the children of God’ and he would also ‘speake unto men in a more familiar manner, and ... appear unto them in a visible shape’.[21] Michaëlis based his acceptance of the reality of the actions alleged against modern witches on early patristic prophecies that witchcraft would prevail at the end of the world. And like several fellow intellectuals, among them Del Rio, Crespet, and Serclier, he paid particular attention to Hippolytus. In a set of explanatory annotations on the sentences pronounced at Avignon in 1582 he repeatedly cited his *Demonstratio* in order to authenticate specific items in the charges. At this point in the treatise the ‘dayes of which the prediction goeth: *solvetur sathanas*' have very definitely become Michaëlis’s own. It was therefore to be expected that numbers of devils (among them, the Antichrist) should appear to men in the borrowed form of human shape or by assuming ‘phantastical and imaginary’ bodies; that they should congregate in mountains, caves, and deserts; that they should invite their servants to renounce their baptisms; and that, following the Antichrist’s transvection by devils, witches too should fly to sabbats. In this way the predictions of the early Christian martyr were said to be in perfect agreement with ‘the depositions of Sorcerers’. It was, Michaëlis remarked, as though the accused had actually been reading Hippolytus, so closely did their confessions match his eschatological expectations.[22] The same sort of straightforward, literal fulfilment was expected even in the case of Revelation. Since John had said ‘that at the end of the world there shall be a certaine kind of people, who shall beare upon them the signe and character of the beast’, then the demonic marking of witches should be taken as a real, physical action and not just as a purely symbolic reference to sinfulness. And since he had also mentioned the worshipping of the Beast, this was to be taken not in any ‘mysticall sense’ but as corroboration that witches performed an

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calamitez qui adviendront e's derniers temps, et du second advenement de nostre seigneur Jesus Christy trans. N.L.C. (Paris, 1579), ‘Au Lecteur’.

[20] Sarah Ferber, ‘Mixed Blessings: Possession and Exorcism in France, 1598-1654’, Ph.D. thesis (Melbourne, 1994), 158.

[21] Michaëlis, *Discourse of spirits.* 40,46-7.

[22] Ibid. 118,122-3,125,134, 135, see also 107.

actual ritual of homage before a devil-goat.[23] Clearly, these were the specific expectations that Michaelis brought to the exorcisms at Aix-en-Provence. But there was nothing in them that could not be found in intellectual currency at the time; nor, in the circumstances, was it odd for him to assume that demoniacs like Louise Capcau, who were also witches, might (under exorcism) provide vital information about the coming of the Antichrist and the imminence of the Last Judgement.

Much the same can be said of Jean Lc Normant, even though the tone of his writings is more extravagant and he fell foul of the Sorbonne theologians in writing them. We have already had occasion to consider *Le Combat de David contre Goliath* as an expression of general hopes for apocalyptic witch-cleansing. But Le Normant also viewed this purgative action as a kind of exorcism of the body politic, 'possessed', as it were, by heresy, disaffection, and demonism. In his next tract of 1619, *De I'exorcisme,* he claimed that the Antichrist had already arrived in France, that magic and witchcraft had in consequence reached a peak of intensity, and that only the most powerful ecclesiastical weapons wielded by a divine king could break their grip. His striking suggestion was that Louis XIII should personally undergo exorcism and then, free of all demonic contamination, should undertake the exorcism of the whole kingdom. By this he clearly meant the vigorous use of the ritual itself but also the promulgation and enforcement of laws against magicians and witches. Exorcism became a kind of model for the conduct of politics and the character of royal justice. Finally, having issued two 'remonstrances' defending his account of the Lille demoniacs, Le Normant wrote his *De la Jin du monde* of 1625. Drawing on the eschatology of Pcrricrcs-Varin and Panigarola, he attempted a chronology of the last times—from the birth of the Antichrist in 1611, through the onset of his reign in 1640, to the end of the world on 21 March 1651. Again he emphasized the flourishing of magic and witchcraft as signs of a 'dying' world; again he called on Louis to extirpate the forces of darkness and in so doing demonstrate the sacredness of his own rule and of the French monarchy in general. But there is little here that we have not already come across in the literature of demonology and eschatology. The nature and sequence of the last things is commonplace, the association of the Antichrist with magicians and witches wholly traditional. The idea that possession could suggest the whole state of a society and exorcism its political remedy is implicit in the Catholic rite and explicit in many commentaries on the subject. Only Le Normant's elevated imperialism seems momentarily out of place; yet his view of Louis XIII's role is only an early modern version of a form of political eschatology with a very long history indeed.[24]

One other aspect of Lc Normant's eschatological demonology deserves mention—he had himself experienced possession. In 1611 at the very instant of Gaufridy's execution he was attacked by a furious fever that led him to proclaim apocalyptic prophecies in the streets around Notre Dame—rather like some Parisian Abiezer Coppe. The episode was due, he said, to the effects of magic. Having himself been one of Concino Concini's clients, he had become infected by 'a demon of this chief minister of Antichrist', a state of affairs that lasted until 1617 when Concini was assassinated and Le Normant successfully exorcized.[25] Were these natural events, which he somehow suffered from, or were they intentional but fraudulently inspired? At the time it was suggested to him that he was either ill or mad. Yet the cultural idiom for this particular behaviour is equally prominent. In fact, there is an overwhelming logic to the idea of the demoniac become prophet. It matches totally the views of possession we have explored and it complements, in particular, the belief that to be possessed was itself to signify future happenings. Le Normant was hardly speaking in a private language, nor was his behaviour peculiar to him. Johann Weyer reported cases of demoniacs prophesying, and divination *perfurorem* was allowed for in German reformation theology.[26] Daniel Schaller, too, spoke of the devil sermonizing and revealing the future via this channel, and it is evident that such revelations could mimic those of Revelation itself. It was reported of Hans Kurtzhals from Amswald in Brandenburg that, in a possession trance that lasted seven years, he exposed witches, prophesied, and warned of God's anger and of the Last Judgement.[27] John Starkie, one of the children exorcized by John Darrell and George More in Lancashire between 1595 and 1597, 'did in his traunce declare the straunge sinnes of this land committed in all estates and degrees of people, [and] denounced the fearfull judgmentes of God due unto them.'[28] 'Ecstatic acclamation' is a feature of apocalyptic rituals; in their setting, demoniacs could become privileged avenues of communication between the godly and their mysterious deity.[29]

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[23] Michaelis, *Discourse of spirits,* 133,148-9.

[24] Sec Ch. 25 above; Le Normant, *L'Exorcisme, passim;* id., *Fin du Monde, passim.*

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We are now in a better position to understand the general eschatology in the exorcisms at Aix and Lille and the overriding concern to force demonic revelations from the possessed. A great deal of Le Normant's *Histoire veritable et memorable* is taken up with showing that what was revealed under exorcism was not merely consistent with, but the actual fulfilment of, all the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments, the Fathers, and medieval saints like Hildegard and (of course) Bridget. Even if the claim itself seems exaggerated, the eschatology here is impeccable and the weight of authority impressive. The revelations were also (according to Le Normant) in agreement with the historical thought of contemporaries like Raemond. The celebratory masses for the Antichrist at the Lille sabbats, the sermons on his powers, theg/or/aj,

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» Lc Normant, *L'Exorcisme,* 4-12. For Concini's alleged association with witchcraft through his wife Leonora Galigai, see Anon., *La Conjuration de Conchine* (Paris, 1618), 8-10, and G. Mongredien, *Leonora Galigai. Un proces de sorcellerie sous Louis XIII* (Paris, 1968). For the antics of Coppc, see Abiezer Coppe, *A fiery flying roll* (London, 1649), 13-15; id., *A second fiery flying roule* (London, 1649), 8-10.

[26] Weyer, *De praestigiis daemon urn,* 28-9; Hieronymus Zanchy, *De divinalione lam arli/ictosa, quam artisexperte,etutriusquevariisspeciebuslractatus*(Hanau, 1610), 165-83.

[27] Engel, *Wider natur und Wunderbuch,* 300-1; cf. Blum, *Historische erzehlung,* sig. Bui; Midelfort, 'The Devil and the German People', 113-14.

u More, *True discourse,* 24-5.

[29] Wilder, 'Rhetoric of Ancient and Modern Apocalyptic', 436-53; Francois Azouvi, Possession, Revelation et Rationalite Medicale au debut du xvif Siecle', *Revue des Sciences Philosophques et Theologiques,* 64 (1980), 356-7.

canticles, and processions in his honour were rites marking his incorporation into the society of devils and witches. But as such they also marked a liminal moment in history itself, for they pointed literally to the threshold before the fulfilment of all prophecy.

As for Verin's pronouncement of 27 December 1610, we can also see why this was taken to be no ordinary disclosure. He claimed at the time that it surpassed all the revelations of God's saints in the past. The imminence of the end itself conferred greater insight (another common eschatological concept), while the arrival of the Antichrist turned what had previously been mere prognostication into current affairs. The latter also accounted for the flourishing of witchcraft both locally and as a national disease, for witches and magicians were themselves prophets and forerunners of the Antichrist; no wonder the schools of magic in Paris were more frequented than the divinity lectures at Avignon. On the other hand, in heralding the ultimate destruction of the devil, Verin was also speaking of the final defeat of magic, even at its moment of greatest historical influence. In addition, his remarks were a call to arms in a struggle with an apocalyptic outcome; 'There shall bee two bands and two armies, the one belonging to God, the other fighting for the Divell, and in this army shall Antichrist bee.' But, above all, what was most remarkable was that the promising of these events was itself a demonic utterance, constrained by the powers of the ritual to be at once both truthful and self-defeating. Its historical type (Michaelis explained) was the story of Balaam, 'God putting that into his mouth which was not in his heart, and he speaking oppositely unto that which hee had determined, whereby Magick was by the Magician himselfe defeated and put to confusion.'[30] It was in the nature of all successful exorcisms to have this effect; but in an eschatological context telling the truth about the deceptions by which the Antichrist claimed to be Christ was a forced utterance of unique significance. Indeed, it was a prodigy that entirely surpassed, in the realm of truth, those all-powerful signs and wonders by which, in the realm of deceit, the Antichrist would seek to achieve pre-eminence. Those who doubted the propriety of listening to demons in such circumstances were not merely (in the eyes of Michaelis and the other exorcists) misunderstanding the nature of the ritual. They were missing an opportunity of fundamental importance to understand their historical predicament. Possession and exorcism had always symbolized the rhythms of the historical process. But on this occasion they were actually a part of the momentous events with which history was being brought to a close.

[M] Michaelis, *Admirable historic.* 260-8,282, sig. A8'.

PART IV

Religion

29

Witchcraft and Religion

> Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.
>
> (Isaiah 26:16)

> The declinations from religion, besides the privative, which is atheism and the branches thereof, are three; Heresies, Idolatry, and Witchcraft; Heresies, when we serve the true God with a false worship; Idolatry, when we worship false gods, supposing them to be true; and witchcraft, when we adore false gods, knowing them to be wicked and false. For so your Majesty doth excellently well observe, that Witchcraft is the height of Idolatry.
>
> (Francis Bacon, *Advancement of Learning)*

IT might well seem perverse to distinguish 'religion' as a separate feature of European witchcraft beliefs. If the devil of traditional Christianity was not a religious entity, then he was nothing. Demonology in all its manifestations was not merely saturated with religious values; it was inconceivable without them. They lay deep in its conceptual structure and, more overtly, in the patterns of thought and language of those who wrote about witchcraft. Demonic actions were defined in contrast to divine ones and the vices of (female) witches in contrast to the virtues of their godly (male) contemporaries. Demonism was only physically possible at all thanks to a particular theology of nature, and it was eventually made physically impossible by a different one. Its place in history—indeed, its historical role—was determined (so it was thought) by biblical prophecy and uncovered by eschatological enquiry. In Part V we shall see too that the character of witchcraft as a crime, even in the sphere of secular justice, was influenced heavily by theocratic notions of the authority brought to bear on it.

Yet it is equally obvious that 'religion' is not exhausted by high-level metaphysics and ethics, or by its influence on natural, historical, and political philosophy. What is striking about books on witchcraft and magic from the early modern period is how many of them were produced either by clergymen or by those who trained or advised clergymen. The questions these authors addressed were largely to do with the problems of piety arising from the personal good fortune or (more usually) misfortune of parishioners, where the last thing that was needed was complicated metaphysics or philosophy: how should lay people try to prevent or respond to their afflictions, including *maleficium*\ what sorts of preservatives or remedies should they use and who should they consult for them; what was the difference between allowable (godly) and forbidden (demonic) practices in this area; what was the nature of the sins that might be committed and how might these be punished? Such texts were aimed first and foremost at clerical practice, and their religiosity was the religiosity of churches. Their tone was homiletic and evangelical, rather than intellectual and theoretical, the intention being to guide both the pastoral efforts of the clergy and, through them, the patterns of lay behaviour. They ran parallel, in this sense, to discussions of such things as sexual behaviour and the regulation of families, observance of the sabbath, the evils of drinking and dancing, and other issues of lay morality.

Many of these texts originated as sermons and some retained this form in print. Others were composed as dialogues to improve their didactic impact. Here, the continuity between specialist discussions and a more general literature was complete. Those who chose to concentrate on this kind of evangelical demonology surrounded their notions of‘witchcraft’, ‘magic’, and ‘superstition’[1] with a theological orthodoxy available to them in religious dogmatics, in casuistry, and in biblical commentary. One senses a faithful transposition of the ideas taught in countless faculties of theology into the writings of their clerical graduates. Conversely, the same topics received constant attention from the dogmatists and casuists themselves. Between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, an enormous number of discussions of these transgressions can be found in the manuals of advice addressed to penitents and confessors, in the books of rules written for inquisitors, in expositions of the Decalogue, in both catechetical texts and guides to how to benefit from them, and, of course, in sermons. To neglect this literature is, thus, to get a false impression of the incidence of demonology in early modern culture.[1] [2] Here, the two-way relationship between ‘demonologists’ and their contemporaries that is the subject of this book was especially apparent—simply because there was virtually no intellectual distance between them.

In what religious sense, after all, were ‘demonologists’ distinct?[3] William Perkins, it need hardly be said, was the most prolific and influential of the ‘puritans’ of Elizabethan England, and an authority on virtually every aspect of Calvinist theology and morality. His Lutheran equivalent (and one of his readers) in northern Germany in the early seventeenth century was Hermann Samson, clergyman in Riga from 1608 and superintendent-general of the Livonian Church from 1622. He was inspector of the Riga schools and later professor of theology at the *Gymnasium.* For twenty years he ordained pastors, wrote church and school ordinances, held disputations, made visitations, and organized synods—as well as conducting a fierce polemic with the local Jesuits, carrying out his own teaching duties, and writing on a wide range of subjects.[4] [5] The same point could be made about Johann Brenz (Wiirttemberg), Heinrich Bullinger (Zürich), or Abraham Scultetus (the Palatinate), each a major figure of territorial Protestantism; or about Hemmingsen, a student of Melanchthon’s at Wittenberg, whose stature in the Copenhagen theology faculty (and as the university’s vice-chancellor) enabled him to influence a whole generation of Danish clergymen; or about George Gifford and Richard Bernard, both outspoken in their defence of the ‘hotter’ sort of English Protestantism. Among the Lutheran pastors who wrote on magic and witchcraft were several who were *Hofprcdiger* or superintendents—Hermann Hamelmann (Gandersheim in Brunswick), Arnold Mengering (Dresden, Altenburg, Halle), Andreas Musculus (Frankfurt an der Oder, Brandenburg), Hinrich Rimphoff (Verden), and Joachim Zchner (Henneberg). These men were often the drafters of the new church ordinances and the conductors of visitations, as well as the general propagandists of Protestantism. Some of them were prolific writers on a wide range of other religious issues.

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[1] What these terms meant in the religious debates of the period will become clear in later chapters.

[2] As, for example, in the case of Hungary, where the view that there was little Hungarian demonolog)’ rests on a neglect of the biblical commentaries, catechisms, confessions, and sermons in which Calvinists, especially, treated the subject; sec Ildikó Kristóf, ‘Boszorkányiildözés Debrecenben és Bihar vármegyében a 16/18. században (Witch-Hunting in Debrecen and Bihar County from the 16th to the 18th Centuries),’ Ph.D thesis (Budapest, 1991). I am grateful to the author for providing information from this thesis, in the form of an unpublished paper, ‘Calvinist Demonology and Witch-Hunting in 16/17th-Century Hungary’. For the same point in relation to Catholic Portugal, sec below, Ch. 31.

[2] The question is implicit in Mandrou’s reminder of the other intellectual interests of ‘demonologists’; *Magistrals et torciers,* 139-44, esp. 143-4 for the theologians.

Among the Catholic witchcraft authors, Pierre Crespet was a priest in the Vivarais, a veteran *ligueur,* and eventually prior of the order of Celestines in Paris. He also published theological and devotional works on the immortality of the soul, the Virgin Mary, the saints, and the life of St Catherine, as well as a *Summa catholicae fidei.* The distinguished theology professor at Freiburg im Breisgau for thirty-one years, Jodocus Lorichius, was one of ‘the most important and productive Catholic theologians of the later sixteenth- and early seventeenth-centuries’. His long career as a polemicist closed with two mammoth contributions to religious orthodoxy, one an A to Z of contemporary heresies and errors, with the corresponding Catholic truths, the other an encyclopaedic thesaurus of Catholic theology and practice/ Friedrich Forner spent thirty-six years as *Domprediger* of Bamberg, twenty of them as suffragan bishop. He served two of the most zealous of the city’s prince-bishops, acting as their general visitor of churches, and saw no fewer than 411 of his sermons and addresses into print—102 on the psalms, 214 on the Passion and Resurrection, 35 on superstition, magic, and witchcraft, 30 on Marian devotions, and 30 on guardian angels.[6] The colleges and universities where the Jesuit Martin Del Rio spent a lifetime of study were among the most active and influential in the new Catholic Europe—the Collège de Clermont, Douai, Louvain, Salamanca, and Graz. The Jansenist Abbé Thiers remained a countryside *curé* all his life but still busied himself with devotional writings, treatises on the festivals, games, and entertainments permissible in a purified Christianity, and controversies over the proper use of altars, roods, and the cathedral porch at Chartres.

[4] *slllgemeine Deutsche Biographic,* xxx. 312-15; C. A. Berkholz, Af. *Hermann Samson, Rigascher Oberpastor, Superintendent von Livlandetc.* (Riga, 1856), *passim,* and, on Samson’s witchcraft sermons, W9-57.

[5] Stephan Ehses, ‘Jodocus Lorichius, katholischer Thcologer und Polemiker des 16. Jahrhunderts’, in id. (cd.), *Festschrift zum elftiundertjährigen Jubiläum des deutschen Campo Santo in Rom* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1897), 242-55, quotation at 242. Lorichius lists his own writings in his *Thesaurus novus utriusque theologiae, theoricae etpracticae* (2 vols.; Freiburg im Breisgau, 1609), which contains standard discussions *ofdaemones(i.* 732-47), *magia(ii.* 1324-8), *mateftcium (ii.* 1331-46), and rw/)rn//7^(ii. 1866-7).

* *Al/gemeine Deutsche Biographic,* vii. 157-9.

These men were not 'demonologists'; what they were, of course, was religious reformers. Witchcraft concerned them because of its relevance to their wider demands for new lay pieties and the problems of getting ordinary men and women to adopt them—that is to say, to the kind of 'reformation' (even 'Christianization') that historians of early modern religion have recently been describing.[7] There was nothing forced or artificial about this connection; we are certainly not dealing with sensationalism, or the arbitrary linking of unrelated things, or mere rationalization. On the contrary, what witchcraft meant to them was inseparable from their notions of doctrinal truth and their experience, personal or vicarious, of evangelical fieldwork; while these, in turn, were informed by the particular model of the witch that they came to elaborate. There was never such a thing as 'mere' witchcraft in early modern Europe—some essential, unmodified residue lying beyond particular versions of it and intelligible without recourse to them. Like any use of language, 'witchcraft' only meant what it meant in particular cultural settings—'language-games', as it were—and nowhere is this more true than in its reflection of, and its capacity to convey, religious meanings.

Nor was the connection an unimportant one, either for demonology or for reformation thought and practice, whether Protestant or Catholic. In the chapters that follow, we will see that witchcraft, magic, and superstition were allied to the foremost theological preoccupations of the age—divine sovereignty, human faith, religious therapies, the pure conscience. Their eradication was thus a reformers' priority. This adds weight to a version of the 'acculturation thesis', so very different were clerical perceptions of misfortune and redress from those of the audience at which they directed their efforts. The years that separated Pedro Ciruelo's book on superstition and Fridrich Balduin's on the conscience saw probably the most sustained attempt there has ever been by clerics to standardize ordinary people's cultural habits. Historians of religion now think of this, as did the clerics themselves, as both an 'internal' and an 'inner' mission—analogous to the work of missionaries external to Europe and, at the same time, concerned with spiritual interiority. Demonology was so integral to this intended revolution that neither makes full sense when considered apart from the other.

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In early modern Europe (as, indeed, in more recent times) most ordinary people regarded witchcraft as a cause of affliction. The important thing about it was the harm that it did to themselves, their livelihoods, and their families and communities.

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[7] The kind of 'reformation' I have in mind is the one that has emerged from such studies as: Burke, *Popular Culture,* 207-43; Evans, *Making of the Habsburg Monarchy,* 383-91; Philip T HofTman, *Church and Community in the Diocese of Lyon, 1500-1789* (London, 1984), esp. 71-97; Loma Jane Abray, *The People's Reformation: Magistrates, Clergy, and Commons in Strasbourg, 1500-1598* (Oxford, 1985), esp. 186-223; Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *Zwickau in Transition, 1500-1547: The Reformation as an Agent of Change* (London, 1987), 177-14; Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline, passim,* esp. 151-62; Marc R. Forster, *The Counter-Reformation in the Villages: Religion and Reform in the Bishopric of Speyer, 1560-1720* (London, 1992), esp. 94-116; Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch, passim-,* Nallc, *God in La Mancha, passinr.* Henry Kamen, *The Phoenix and the Flame: Catalonia and the Counter Reformation* (London, 1993), *possi'"-*

The witch was seen, first and foremost, as someone with the power and the ill-will to inflict real damage on her victims. She (sometimes he) disrupted the weather, wasted crops, and ruined the production of things like beer and butter. Men and women and their children and animals sickened and were injured or killed. They were not, of course, defenceless against this *maleficium,* but the steps taken to withstand witchcraft only show again that it was experienced as an essentially physical threat. Popular culture in this period was rich in precautionary measures for keeping a dwelling, a journey, or a marriage free of a witch's malice—and, in effect, for maintaining a general equilibrium between the forces of fortune and misfortune.[8] Once afflicted, individuals might diagnose *nialeficitim* themselves or consult and take advice from those skilled in counter-witchcraft and the other 'cunning' arts. Remedies too were either chosen privately from the fund of measures available to all or acquired from local specialists. Eventually, the bewitched and their supporters might appear in the courts, seeking the remedy of the law. But their preoccupations were still, not unnaturally, the harms they had suffered and a desire to avenge them.

There is a rich ethnography in the way these popular reactions to witchcraft—ranging from prevention to redress—varied in detail across Europe.[9] Also highly rewarding has been the analysis of what they reveal about the relationships between witches, victims, and punishers, and how these, in turn, indicate conflicts and changes in early modern communities. In the chapters that follow, both this ethnography and its analysis will be taken for granted; all that will be important here is the prevalence among ordinary people of the view that witchcraft was a way of harming them, together with the existence in their culture of practical steps for dealing with it. It used to be said that it was one of the 'functions' of witchcraft beliefs to explain afflictions in communities that had no other way of accounting for them.[10] But it seems odd now (because it is tautologous[I] [11]) to talk of a belief being used to explain what in fact constituted its meaning, as well as to imply that it would not have meant anything at all if people had known better. Witchcraft for the average person was indeed an explanation for things that went wrong, and, given widespread assumptions about causality and responsibility, a perfectly adequate one. I propose, then, to think of it in altogether non-functionalist terms as, so to speak, an idiom in a very popular language—the language of everyday misfortune.

[I] For this notion of equilibrium, see Nluchembled, *Sorcières, justice et société,* 152-5.

[9] There is a considerable amount of information in A. van Gcnncp, *Manuel de folklore franfats contemporain* (12 pts. in 5 vols.; Paris, 1938-58). For more recent studies, see esp. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 177-252; Macfarlane, *Witchcraft,* 103-14; Ginzburg, *Night Battles, passim;* Muchembled, *Popular Culture,* 24-30,61-93,101-7; Scribner, 'Ritual and Popular Religion', 47-77; Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch,* 128-61, 210-25; Baumgarten, *Hexenwahn und Hexenverfolgung,* 366-96. For an esp. sensitive account of witchcraft accusations and consultations in the context of'health-seeking behaviour', see Ronald C. Sawyer, ' "Strangely Handled in all her Lyms": Witchcraft and Healing in Jacobean England', J. *Social Hist. 22* (1988-9), 461-85. Some of the best evocations of what witchcraft meant in small communities are found in Briggs, *Communities of Belief,* 7-105.

[10] For the origin of this idea, see E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford, 1937), 63-83,99-106; cf. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 535-^16.

[II] A point made in some typically astute remarks on this subject by Needham, *Primordial Characters,* 32.

Those authors on whom I concentrate, who saw things from a clerical point of view, spoke about witchcraft and misfortune in a very different language and drew on very different notions of causality and responsibility. For them, the real significance of events attributed to witchcraft was not the physical damage that (allegedly) occurred but the way that the sufferer, as in all cases of affliction, was provided by God with an opportunity for introspection and spiritual betterment. In this view, to concentrate on the degree of *maleficium* involved, blaming only witches for its occurrence, was at least a kind of hypocrisy and probably outright atheism. It undervalued the spiritual dimension of misfortune as a retribution and a test, and it questioned God's ultimate control over affairs; it even implied Manichaeism, since it suggested a source of evil independent of God. Instead, attention ought to be transferred both from the witch to God, and also from the witch to the victim, throwing the burden of responsibility back on the latter. The proper response to misfortune was to begin with reflections on faith and sin, move on to the twin therapies of repentance and patience, and conclude with requests for divine and clerical assistance. Only then might the physical remedies that God had placed in nature and (for example) in the hands of authorized physicians be applied. An affliction by witchcraft was not, therefore, a case of misfortune; it was a case of conscience—what the Lutherans called a *Gewissensfrage*—and one in which the spiritual well-being of the general populace was at stake.

Popular precautions and remedies, moreover, were condemned as idolatrous and superstitious. They ignored the need for such things as self-scrutiny, prayer, and repentance, as well as the benefits of'bearing the cross', proffering, in effect, a therapy which rivalled that of the churches. At the same time, the powers on which ordinary people relied to protect them from *maleficium* or remedy its effects were, themselves, very often entirely specious. They were based on the attribution to persons, places, times, and things of properties that had no existence in nature and no warrant in orthodox religious practice; they were, according to this definition, superstitious and magical. This, to the clerics, made popular counter-witchcraft indistinguishable from the witchcraft against which it was directed; both derived whatever efficacy they had (or appeared to have) from the only other kind of source that remained—the agency of devils. In the end, many churchmen came to think that what was done to avoid or respond to *maleficium* had much more serious implications than the original witchcraft itself. What concerned them, again, was nothing less than the general spiritual welfare of the laity. In this respect, one of them said, many men and women seemed to have 'but a small deale of any good religion'.[12]

It is usual to express these differences of view in terms of contrasting attitudes to the demonic. Ordinary people, it has been said, paid little attention to devils or saw them simply as one of the many hostile forces that it was necessary to keep at bay. They did not trace *maleficium* to demonic agency or think of the witch as a servant of Satan unless taught to do so by others. The clerics, together with magistrates and the

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[11] Holland, *Treatise.* sig. G2^{f}.

learned classes in general, assimilated witchcraft to heresy and apostasy, focused attention on the pact, and moulded accusations and confessions until they yielded evidence of devil-worship. There were, thus, two 'languages' of witchcraft, one concentrating on sorcery, the other on diabolism, and they expressed two different sets of interests.[13] While retaining its usefulness, this is a view that tends to neglect the interplay between lay and clerical beliefs and their agreement, even, in later phases of the witch trials. In particular, it underestimates the demonological elements in popular traditions of witchcraft, which on occasions furnished folkloric versions of even the sabbat.[14] On the other hand, whatever the real state of cultural exchange and consensus in these matters, it was at least the *perception of* clerics that there was not merely a difference of opinion between them and their flocks but a huge chasm. For them, too, the issue was indeed that of getting lay people to understand the role of the devil in their lives and to take it more seriously. If this is what led them to write as they did, it is a perception that ought to be investigated. This is what I attempt in these chapters on the religious elements in demonology.

What should be stressed at the outset, however, is that this clerical perception stemmed not from literalness in witchcraft matters but from an overwhelmingly spiritualized reading of the sin. Even if it is conceded that their preoccupations were with the demonic elements in witchcraft (and in magic and superstition too), it should not be assumed that all clerics sensationalized these elements by dwelling for example on the lurid details of the witches' sabbat. The texts we are about to consider, whether Protestant or Catholic, whether English or Continental,[15] are notable for the way they internalized virtually all the traditional ingredients of witchcraft, turning them into spiritual problems. In the case of Lutheran demonology, this was very much a product of Luther's own witchcraft beliefs. But John Gaule was voicing a general Protestant view when he said that the reason to bring 'divinity' to the understanding of witchcraft was in order 'to examine the conscience by the Rules of the word, and dictates of right reason; and to discern and declare how utterly opposite the diabolicall Covenant is, to the Covenant of Grace'.[16] In this way, the devil became an evangelical enemy, and witchcraft a branch of idolatry. There was, in fact, little interest in the sabbat or in *maleficitim* as such, and less than one would suppose in the question of secular punishment. It may well be that clerical responsibility for

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[13] Muchembled, *Sorcieres. justice et société,* 123-8, see also 38-42. The distinction is traced historically in Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials,* 27-46 and *passim,* and in the context of 17th-c. New England by Richard Weisman, *Witchcraft, Magic, and Religion in 17th-Century Massachusetts* (Amherst, Mass., 1984), 53-72. See also Briggs, *Communities of Belief,* 14-21, and, expressing more caution, 68-9,80-2.

[14] for these various problems, see Holmes, 'Popular Culture?', 85-111; E. William Monter, *Ritual, Myth and Magic in Early Modern Europe* (Brighton, 1983), 19-20; Robin Briggs, 'Le Sabbat des sorciers en Lorraine' in Nicole Jacques-Chaquin and Maxime Preaud (eds.), *Le Sabbat des sorciers (xt'-XVIir siecles)* (Grenoble, 1993), 155-63; Ginzburg, *Myths, Emblems, Clues,* 1-16; Midelfort, 'Devil and the German People', 10 -4.

[15] I mention this only because English demonology has sometimes been said to be substantially different from its Continental counterpart, whereas its production by clerics (in the main) and its concentration on spiritual issues tied it closely to clerical writings elsewhere.

[16] Gaule, *Cases of conscience,* 100.

'witch-hunting' has been exaggerated. We shall eventually see that for clergymen and academic theologians the character of witchcraft was determined, above all, by its place in the Decalogue as an infringement of the first Commandment. Rather than a crime, it was a sin—and, thus, a matter for what has been called 'penitential discipline', where the churches' response was not, like the secular states', punitive and expiatory, but pastoral and salvific.[17]

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[17] For the concept of 'penitential discipline', see Heinz Schilling, '"History of Crime" or "History of Sin"?—Some Reflections on the Social History of Early Modern Church Discipline', in Kouri and Scott (eds.), *Politics and Society in Reformation Europe*, 300.

30

Cases of Conscience

> The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.
>
> Gobi: 21)

> [The devil] shal vexc you with infirmyties and sickenes, or els cause you by some diseases, or throughc wandering and straing abroad to lose part of your goodes and cattel. And god to prove you and to know, whether ye come faithfullye unto him or no, or whether yet ye with al your heartes do despise the craftincs of the devil, or sette more by hys love, or by ye losse of youre cattell, doth suffer al this to chaunce and happen. But if ye would with heart and perfectc faythe, once or twysc dcspyse suche wickednes and misfortunes as Satan doth trouble you withal, god would vouchsafe so to repel and withdraw hym from troubling and vexing of you, that he with al his craft and subtilitc shuld never deceive you.
>
> (St Augustine, *Certainesermons of sainte Augustines)*

THE idea that the misfortunes allegedly brought by witchcraft were primarily a matter for the conscience was dominant among the Protestant pastors of early modern Europe. It was derived directly from their theology, and reflected its stress on divine sovereignty, its heightened sensitivity to dualism, and its intense fideism. In Calvin's *Institutes,* for example, it was insisted—without witchcraft being mentioned specifically—that providence curbed 'Satan with all his furies and whole equipage' and that the victims of evildoers should 'mount up to God, and learn to believe for certain that whatever our enemy has wickedly committed against us was permitted and sent by God's just dispensation'.[1] The injunctions of Moses, the story of Job, and the doctrines of grace found in the New Testament provided full biblical support, and were very frequently the direct textual inspiration for Protestant demonology. Job's attitude to tribulation was so crucial to the argument that the Book of Job, in particular, must be regarded as its scriptural corner-stone. As Erik Midelfort has said, so much emphasis was given to God's ultimate management of human afflictions that only Job could provide the proper role model for victims of *malejicium.* The one man who responded to the greatest conceivable misfortune with absolute moral propriety became the 'towering archetype of the providential view' of witchcraft.[1] [2]

In the German south-west the classic Lutheran expression of this view appeared in a sermon on hailstorms preached in 1539 by Johann Brcnz, the 'father of

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[1] Calvin, *Institutes,* i. 197-237 (quotations at 201,221). For Luther's witchcraft beliefs I rely on Jörg Haustein, *Martin Luthers Stellung zum Zauber- und Hexenwesen* (Stuttgart, 1990), as well as id., 'Martin Luther als Gegner des Hexenwahns', in Lehmann and Ulbricht (eds.), *Vom Unfug des Hexen-Processes,* 35-51.

[2] Midelfort, *Witch Hunting,* 61,65.

Württemberg theology’.[3] Whatever its natural causes, he warned his hearers, bad weather was a punishment for sin and a test of faith; either way it signified God’s utter control over their fortunes. It was nothing short of idolatry, then, to attribute it to devils or witches and to believe that it could be avoided if the former were exorcized from the air and all the latter were ‘burned at once’. God might work through the devil, but without allowing him any independent powers whatsoever—as in the example of Job. And the devil might go on to implicate witches by deceiving them into thinking they had real agency in the matter, while perpetrating, or at least foreseeing, everything himself. Reducing witches to ashes would not, therefore, prevent storms. The proper responses to misfortune must match its providential origin. According to Brcnz, these were penance, amendment of life, working at one’s calling, and trusting in the Lord to help?

These arguments were taken up by Johann Spreter, Matthaeus Alber, Wilhelm Bidembach, Jacob Heerbrand, Conrad Platz, and many other Württemberg theologians, pastors, and jurists.[5] Eventually they became the orthodoxy in the duchy and the foundation of theological and legal opinion at the university of Tiibingen, as well as finding echoes in stories of witchcraft published for a less academic audience.[6] They also influenced men like Jacob Graeter in Schwäbisch Hall and David Meder in neighbouring Hohenlohe.[7] Fora century and a half, Lutherans in this part of Germany emphasized the spiritual implications of public disasters and their providential origin, and played down the direct, physical threat of witchcraft. To think otherwise, said a Tübingen professor, was to deprive God of his very ‘title and name (that He alone is Almighty)’. The aim was to divert the moral energies of the victims of affliction away from vengeance against witches and towards self-examination and repentance. More than once it was remarked (in a dubious metaphor) that it was only dogs that bit the stone rather than the man who threw it at them; pious Christians should know better.[8]

However, the tradition sustained in Württemberg was only a particularly consistent and stable example of the point of view of most German Protestants, few of whom failed to stress the power of God and the powerlessness of witches. In a set of Lenten

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’ Bruce Tolley, ‘Pastors and Parishioners in Württemberg during the late Reformation (1581-1621): A Study of Religious Life in the Parishes of Districts Tübingen and Tuttlingen’, Ph.D. thesis (Sunford, 1984), 76.

[4] Johann Brcnz, *On Hailstorms,* trans. H. C. Erik Midelfort, in id., ‘Were There Really Witches?’, in R. M. Kingdon (ed.), *Transition and Revolution* (Minneapolis, 1974), 213-19. For the early editions of this much reprinted sermon, see Midelfort, *Witch Hunting,* 237 n. 25. Brcnz had already published a study of Job in 1526.

* Matthaeus Alber and Wilhelm Bidembach, *Ein Summa etlicher Predigen vom Hagel und Unholden* (Tübingen, 1562), sigs. Aiii'-Ci’, Ciii"’. On Platz, sec below, Ch. 31. On Spreter and Heerbrand, see Midelfort, *Witch Hunting,* 38-9,40-1.

* See, for example, *Zn>o Hexen Zeitung, Die Erste: Auss dem Bissthumb Wurtzburg... DieAnder, Auss dem Hertzogthumb Würtenberg* (Tübingen, 1616).

[7] Graeter, *Hexen oder Unholden Predigten,* sigs. Civ’-Dii’; David Meder, *Acht Hexentredigten* (Leipzig, 1605), fos.61’-83',84'-95*.

* Midelfort, *Witch Hunting,* 38-56 (quoution at 43).

sermons which the pastor Joachim Zehncr delivered to his congregation at Schleusingen in Thuringia in March 1612, witchcraft was little more than a vehicle for homiletic reflections on temptation, sin, repentance, and forgiveness. To this sequence of spiritual events Zehncr assimilated the devil's physical assaults on men and women, their reaction to affliction, and the temporal and eternal deserts of witches and magicians. The second sermon was typical in using the story of Job to attribute the disasters supposedly caused by witches to a demonic agency working well within divine limits and for divine purposes. God only intended to punish the irreligious or try the faithful, and in both cases the spiritual challenge was infinitely more significant than any physical hurt.[9] The deacon of Arheilgen, near Darmstadt, Johann Ellingcr, agreed that a greater good always followed from the misfortunes that God allowed the devil and his servants to bring, as long as the victims seized the opportunity to examine their consciences. This was the fundamental moral principle at work in his tract of 1629, *Hexen Coppel,* as well as in four further series of witchcraft sermons by Lutheran pastors—those given by Daniel Schaller at the Marienkirche in Stcndal in Brandenburg sometime before 1611, by Bernhard Albrecht in Augsburg and Hermann Samson in Riga in the mid-1620s, and by Johannes Riidingcr in Ober-Oppurg and Weyra in Saxony in the 1630s.[10]

In fact, the providential view of witchcraft was not even a particularly German phenomenon; it was general to Protestant Europe. The Swiss reformer Heinrich Bullinger, for example, argued that *maleficium* was only ever achieved by demonic power and only allowed at all because God wished to see how the faithful would react. His tract on witchcraft and the 'forbidden arts' concludes not with an attack on the vehicles of affliction but with a statement of God's absolute lordship over the affairs of men and women.[11] In Meidcn in the Upper Palatinate, the pastor Adrian Rheynmannus wrote a short history of the devil that focused only on the sins, punishment, and redemption of those subject to his physical attacks.[12] Providentialism also influenced the Danish reformer Pedcr Palladius, Hemmingsen's *Admonitio de superstitionibus magicis vitandis* (and the views of other pastors of Denmark), Hermann Samson, and Ludvig Dunte, who dealt with witchcraft within the Swedish spheres of influence in the Baltic and Eastern Europe, and the Calvinists of the Hungarian city of Debrecen.[13] Hemmingsen, for example, taught the usual Jobian ideals and the usual basic rules of behaviour for the misfortunate; they should avoid deliberate sin, avail themselves of remittance for sins of ignorance or weakness, use prayer to fight the devil, and, submitting themselves to providence, patiently await their eternal bliss. Those who resorted instead to the diabolical arts were spiritual criminals on a big scale; they 'shake off faith, lay aside the choice of God, leave the fear of God, disregard God's ordinances, call into doubt His divine promises, and cast off the patience which belongs to Christians'.[14] According to a leading historian of the Danish witchcraft trials, the tracts on repentance and the general devotional literature that spread through Denmark in the seventeenth century attributed all misfortunes 'to the chastisement of God of the sinner'.[15]

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[9] Joachim Zehncr, *FiintfPredigten Von den Hexen, ihren anfang, MittelundEndinsich haltendunderkIdrend* (Leipzig, 1613), 17-35 (second sermon); witchcraft is not dealt with in the fifth sermon.

[10] Ellingcr, *Hexen Coppel,* 49-52; cf. Daniel Schaller, *Zauber Handel in viii predigten* (Magdeburg, 1611), sigs. Miii'-Oiv'; Albrecht, *Magia,* 186-7, 235-46,273-91; Samson *Neun ... Hexen Predigt,* sigs. Ji?', QiV, Tiir; Johannes Riidingcr, *De Magia illicita decas concionum; zehen nuthliche Predigten von der Zauber- und Hexenwerck a us auleitung he,liger Schrifit* (Jena, 1630), 131-57; id., *Decas conconumsecunda, de magia illicita. Zehen grundliche Predigten von so viel sonderbarn Arten derverbotenen heydnuch paputucher Crewel (Jem,* 1635), 194-6.

[11] *BMinger, Von hexen und unholden, 303-5-*

[12] Adrian Rheynmannus, *Christlich undnothwendig Gesprach,* 97-114.

[13] On Debrecen, see Ildiko Kristof, "Wise Women, Smners and the Poor [illegible] Background of Witch-Hunting in a 16th-18th Century Calvinist City of Eastern Hungary', *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica,* 37 (1991-2), 101. On the Danish clergy, see Jens Christian V. Johansen, 'Witchcraft, Sin and Repentance: The Decline of Danish Witchcraft Trials', *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica,* 37 (1991-92), 415-19.

It is true that neither Lambert Dancau nor Francois Perrault in the French-speaking lands were particularly fulsome exponents of the Calvinist equivalent—although Dancau (who published his witchcraft tract while a Geneva pastor) insisted that the bewitched, besides using allowable 'physic', should 'patiently abyde and looke for ye helpe of God, and depende onely upon his providence'.[16] But their clerical colleagues among the English Calvinists were all pure providentialists, as was the Westphalian preacher Anton Praetorius, who decried the too hasty attribution of all ills to witchcraft, and Theodore Beza, Calvin's successor in Geneva.[17] In the early seventeenth century, the 'plaine Countrey Minister' of Batcombe in Somerset, Richard Bernard, and, nearly twenty years later, the Huntingdonshire preacher John Gaule were only drawing together a line of thought to which George Gifford, the Holland brothers, Perkins, James Mason (not, perhaps, a cleric), Alexander Roberts, and Thomas Cooper had already contributed. All were agreed that the task of combating popular misapprehensions about the origin and purpose of misfortune and about the powers of witches was far more important than simply driving home the dangers of Satanism pure and simple.[18]

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In England, as elsewhere, the argument was grounded on an insistence on God's absolute sovereignty. The multitude were in 'grosse errour', wrote Henry Holland, in granting witches the power of life and death, 'whereas neither they, nor Sathan him selfe by them can take away the least haire from the greatest sinner upon earth, but when God permits them'. Perkins agreed that whatever they did was 'derived wholly from Satan', who could not go 'a whit further, then God gives him leave and libertie to goe'. During the 1640s Gaule was to complain again that, in popular imagination, the witch acted more like a devil than a witch, and the devil more like God than a devil. Providence could only be safeguarded and a proper sense of responsibility restored if these assimilations were reversed and the witch was given the least significant role in the bringing of affliction.[19] Witches, insisted Holland, were 'but Sathans instruments and Satan but God's. This was typical of the anti-Manichaeism that informed witchcraft beliefs among Protestant intellectuals.[20]

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[14] Hemmingsen, *Admonitio*, sigs. D3v, M4v–M7r; cf. for Denmark, the [illegible] science relating to magic and witchcraft in Jesper [or Caspar] Brochmand, *Systema theologiae*, 5th edn. (Ulm and Frankfurt/Main, 1658), pt. ii, 68-9 (first pub. [illegible]); Brochmand was Bishop of [illegible].

[15] Jens Christian V. Johansen, '[illegible] Elsinore, 1625–1626', *Mentalities*, 3 (19[illegible]5), 7.

[16] Dancau, *Dialogue of Witches*, sig. Liiv; see also sigs. K[illegible]v, [illegible]r.

[17] Praetorius, *Von Zauberey und Zauberern* [illegible]; Theodore Beza, *Job expounded*, trans. anon. (Cambridge, n.d.), sig. E8r (dedication dated 1589).

[18] For parallel evidence of clerical attitudes to misfortune in New England, see Richard Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England* (Cambridge, 1992), 85-121.

It followed, as Bernard put it in his opening chapter-heading, that 'Gods hand is first to bee considered in all crosses, whatsoever the meanes be, and whosoever the instruments, 'for he ruleth over all.' Some misfortunes blamed on witches were (while still providential) only natural contingencies to be met with natural resources; mostly, these were diseases 'unknowne, or strange to vulgar sence'. The rest were certainly demonic but *only* demonic, for, unless they used natural means, witches themselves were quite powerless to effect anything. They cursed and threatened, said Bernard, but it was the devil who worked the mischief. It was thus uncharitable and, more important, irreligious for the afflicted always to suppose 'that they, or theirs, or their cattell are bewitched, [and] that some man or woman hath brought this evill upon them.' Instead, the experience of misfortune ought to be internalized and made the occasion of a spiritual transaction beween the individual (or the community) and God: 'This is Religion: this is Christianlike: thus ought the afflicted to behave themselves, and not sweare and stare, curse and rage, against such as they suspect to harme them ... though their owne wayes be wicked, going on still without reformation.' If God was not provoked by sin but, instead, feared, trusted, and obeyed, there would be no danger from witches or devils.[21]

In spiritualizing witchcraft in these terms, Bernard and his fellow pastors were drawing on important themes in the moral theology of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. The divine origin of misfortune, the patience required of the afflicted, and the consolations and protections brought by piety were constantly discussed in contemporary religious literature.[22] It was also entirely characteristic of Puritan covenant theology that Perkins, for example, should insist that the best protection against witchcraft was to remain 'within the covenant of grace, made and confirmed in the Gospel by the blood of Christ' by believing in its promise of remission of sins and life everlasting and acting on its requirement that the elect repent and obey. Also typical of Puritan priorities were the remedies that Perkins recommended once *maleficium* had occurred. For society as a whole, these were evangelical—the embracing of the gospel, and the maintenance of a learned, preaching ministry. The private conscience was best served by a careful search for the sins that might have brought affliction, by prayer and fasting for pardon and deliverance from them, and by the patient bearing of the actual tribulation. Perkins believed that for the elect bewitchment was a special providence that must eventually have a ‘joyfull issue’, even if this arrived only with death.[23]

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[19] Holland, *Treatise.* sig. G3' (Holland cites in support Bcza's commentary on the Book of Job); Perkins, *Discourse.* 12,40; Gaule, *Cases of conscience.* 121-2,125 (*Cases of conscience* was first given as a set of sermons to Gaulc's parish, Great Staughton in Huntingdonshire).

[20] Holland, *Treatise,* sig. G3'; cf. Alan Macfarlane, 'A Tudor Anthropologist: George Gifford's *Discourse* and *Dialogue',* in Anglo (cd.), *Damned Art.* 148.

[21] Bernard, *Guide to grand-jury men.* 1, H, 75 (= 73), 10. apjw-ctn

[22] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 78-112; Blair Worden, 'Providence and Politics in Cromwellian England', *Past and Present,* 109 (1985), 55-99. For a standard contemporary exposition, see Arthur Dent, *The plaine mans path-way to heaven* (London, 1601), 1113-t.

For the individual person, Holland simply specified the six preservatives ofjob—faith, prayer, a righteous life, the word of God, repentance, and providence itself—and emphasized that the devil would always fail to overcome a truly pious man. But inserted in his spiritual advice for removing witchcraft from the community was another typical piece of contemporary social morality. Shifting his attention from the ‘multitude’ for a moment, Holland complained that greater sins, and hence greater liberty to the devil, were found in the households of their social superiors. Reform in this context meant new standards of godliness and order in family life and marital relationships. It involved the sanctification of the husband, father, and master, the instruction and proper treatment of his dependants, their subjection and obedience to his authority—in short, the establishing of‘a godly domesticall discipline’.[24]

It is possible, therefore, to see in this kind of demonology the religious anxieties that came to be felt about an ordered society in early modern England and which led to ‘the reinforcement of patriarchy’ and other attempts to regulate domestic behaviour.[25] For the most part, however, the aim was to change radically the consciences of the general laity and to do this by clerical means. Bernard was probably being more perceptive than he intended when he remarked that ‘such as little dreame of Witches, and lightly regard them, are hardly any time or never troubled with them.’[26] But the pastors who wrote demonology felt strongly that it was only because ordinary men and women usually interpreted misfortune as a physical hurt brought by malevolent neighbours that they were so often convinced that it was caused by witchcraft. This distracted them from the real significance of their afflictions, which was derived from a view of the responsibility for events that left witches, whatever their evil intentions, with little to contribute. The clerical aim was to bring these two very different views of misfortune into confrontation in the hope that one would supplant the other.

This was the task which George Gifford set himself in the book which best illustrates Protestant providentialism in witchcraft matters, his *Dialogue concerning witches and wttchcrafies* (1593). Here, the popular and the clerical versions of *maleficium* actually do confront each other in the views of an imaginary villager, ‘Samuel’, and those of his acquaintance (and Gifford’s mouthpiece), ‘Daniel’. Samuel and his wife fear from experience that they are the victims of local witches, but assume that a consultation with a ‘cunning’ man or woman will help them identify the culprit and act the threat. They also know from confessions before the justices that witches keep pet 'familiars', who act as vehicles for their malice by carrying out their commands. This uncomplicated view of misfortune, presumably common among Gifford's parishioners, is that it stems from the evil intentions of human beings with the practical assistance of spirits: 'They thinke', as Daniel puts it, 'that the country might be rid of such spirits, if there were none to hoister them, or to set them a work.'[27] Accordingly, Samuel and his wife urge that all witches should be hanged or burned.

Daniel turns this view on its head; in hating witches, the people have become like witches. This is because both their trivialization of spirits and their ignoring of providence play into the devil's hands and make them, in effect, his supporters. Gifford was denying not what happened in cases *vfnialeficitim* but the popular version of how it was done and what it signified. It was the devil's aim to camouflage the magnitude of his spiritual assaults by preoccupying men and women with physical banalities and hiding behind the actions of paltry* familiars. It belittled spirits to make them the mere servants of witches in trifling tasks, and this allowed the devil to get on with the serious business of subverting souls unnoticed. As long as providence was also left out of consideration as the ultimate source of events, the 'blind people' would remain 'farre from knowing the spirituall battell, in which we are to warre under the banner of Christ against the divell, much lesse ... how to put on (as S. Paul willeth) the whole armour of God, to resist and overcome him.'[28] Unknowingly, Samuel had been led away from God to follow the will of Satan; like the witches he denounced he had become an idolater.

As we shall see later, Gifford had much else to say about the demonism implicit in consulting cunning men and women, and about where the real culpability of witches lay. But the first thing was to restore providence to its rightful position in Samuel's religious cosmology and reverse his explanation of misfortune. The witch was in reality 'the vassall of the divell, and not he her servant', while devils were 'so chained up and brideled by this high providence, that they cannot plucke the wing from one poore little Wrenne, without speciall leave given them from the ruler of the whole earth'. The faithful, insisted Daniel, 'are to turne their eies from the witch, and to deale with God, for from him the matter commeth'. The burden of responsibility was Samuel's own and could not be displaced. Divine confidence or, more likely, divine displeasure had justifiably brought the devil down on him, and therefore only repentance, humility, faith, and patience could help him withstand the devil's attentions. Daniel's overall aim was, of course, the same as Samuel's: 'Looke then to the causes,' he said, 'if wee will remoove the effects.' But the logic of Protestant providentialism took his explanation of *nialeficiwn* along an altogether different causal route—not from 'the anger of a poore woman' to the victim's misfortune, but from 'the high soveraignety and providence of God' to the victim's conscience.[29]

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[27] Gifford, *Dialogue,* sig. DIr. [21] Ibid., sigs. C2'-C3'.

[29] Ibid., sigs. C4r, A2', D4', H3*, D2', M2'; Macfarlane, 'A Tudor Anthropologist', 140-55. An important attempt to see Gifford's pastoral and educational aims (in this and three other texts) in the round is Dewey D. Wallace, 'George Gifford, Puritan Propaganda and Popular Religion in Elizabethan England', *Sixteenth Century J.* 9 (1978), 27-49.

Such was the overwhelming insistence on divine sovereignty in Protestant thought that its dominating role in Lutheran and Calvinist discussions *of maleficium* is readily intelligible; even if the effect is to direct our attention, along with the victims', away from those aspects of witchcraft, namely, its embodiment in concrete intentions and actions, that normally assume prominence. But while we would not expect Catholic providentialism to be quite so emphatic, there were many Catholics who thought about witchcraft in the same terms. There was a strain in fifteenth-century demonology, exemplified by the law academic Ulrich Molitor who cited the Book of Job and St Augustine in its support, that attributed *maleficium* entirely to divine intentions to chastise and warn the faithful and increase their merits by temptation.[30] Late medieval nominalism stressed God's controlling agency and a divine covenanting of efficacy to all secondary powers, whether these were sacramental or diabolical. The belief that the individual was ultimately responsible for his or her misfortunes, in the sense that the latter always signified aspects of a personal relationship with the God who brought them, became part of the faith of Catholic urban élites during the sixteenth century and informed the efforts of countless Counter-Reformation priests.[31] It was taught in Catholic as well as in Protestant catechisms, for example, that if bad weather or illness were divine tests and punishments it was a sin to attribute them to magicians and witches.[32] The Augustinian reliance on providence, the 'culpabilization' of the laity, and the concentration on the internal life of the conscience and on penitential behaviour were as much Catholic as Protestant religious phenomena in the era of reform. It is not uncommon, then, to find the Catholic bewitched being equally encouraged to think of their own sins or of the steadfastness of Job whenever they were tempted to blame only demons or witches.[33]

Views identical to Johann Brenz's had already been heard in pre-Reformation Wiirttemberg in the witchcraft sermons given in 1505 in the Tübingen collegiate church by its parish priest, the nominalist Martin Plantsch.[34] A pupil of Gabriel Biel, Plantsch used the principles of the *via modenia* and the story of Job to transfer responsibility for human injuries away from witches and demons (or the stars, or fate) to their origin in God's sovereign will: 'No person, devil, or substance can hurt a man, unless God agrees and gives them power to do so.'[35] There was no inherent

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[50] Molitor, *De lamiis et phitonicis,* in *Malleus maleficarum* (1669 edn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 1). 32-7.

[11] Briggs, *Communities of Belief* 70.

[12] See, for example, Friedrich Nausea, *Catechismuscatholicus* (Cologne, 1553), 186; Michael Helding, *Catechesis* (Mainz, 1555), sigs. Fl'-F2'; Luis de Granada, *Catechismus minor* edn. by Martin Binhart (Cologne, 1624), 206.

" In addition to the citations below, sec Gcilcr, *Die emeis,* fos. lv'-lxiii'; Castaflega, *Tratado,* 318-19; Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum,* 98.

[54] They followed an execution for witchcraft in ind were published at Pforzheim in *Opusculum de sagis maleficis.* I have followed the account *ten of the Reformation,* 158-83 (without subscribing to

power to cause *maleficium* in the means employed by witches, just as there was no inherent power in the Church's own sacramental tools or the good works of pious Christians; efficacy was in each case granted for a providential purpose. The afflicted thus had nothing to fear but God's righteous judgements on their conduct. They should certainly not resort to the remedies of popular counter-witchcraft, nor (Plantsch seems to imply by omission) the destruction of witches. Repentance, sacramental remedies, Jobian endurance, and, ultimately, the expectation of eternal rewards were their proper spritual resources.

In arguing in these terms, Plantsch has been said, like the later Protestants, to have shifted the whole discussion 'from the *Malleus maleficarum* to the *malleus Dei.* from whipping witches to scourging sin'.[36] Those German Catholics who later followed him (in whole or in part) were not all priests or theologians; they included, for example, the Freiburg philosopher and physician Johann Zink.[37] But among them were Reinhard Lutz, a preacher of Sclestat (Schlettstadt) in Alsace, the important Freiburg theologian Jodocus Lorichius, and no less a figure than Friedrich Forner, the early seventeenth-century suffragan bishop of Bamberg. Lutz's views regarding four witches executed at Sclestat in 1570 closely resembled Brcnz's, while Lorichius, who was more concerned with the use of'superstitious' remedies for misfortune than with its initial attribution to witchcraft, relied equally heavily on the Jobian formulas. In a book directed both at 'simple folk' and the priests who ministered to them, he warned against the inordinate fears—including fears of devils and witches—that led the afflicted person to seek help from illicit sources. Only God need be feared, since 'no misfortune can happen to him or anybody else which he, with his sins, does not doubly deserve.' The best way to avoid illnesses, especially those brought by *nialeficium.* was to lead a better life, resort to daily prayer, and employ the sacramental protections of the Church. Once ill, the pious Catholic's priorities were much like the pious Protestant's: first, patience *(Geduld).* then confession and communion, and, finally, a doctor (for natural diseases) or a priest (for unnatural ones).[38]

Forner's *Panoplia armaturae Dei.* published in 1625, a year before the onset of the third major wave of witchcraft prosecutions in Bamberg, was a collection of thirty-five sermons addressed to the citizens of the town and recommended to preachers for many of their Sunday and feast-day addresses. Most of the sermons dealt with the approved remedies for afflictions caused by magic and witchcraft, for Forner's main

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Manfred Schulze, 'Der Hiob-Prcdigcr. Johannes von Staupitz aufder Kanzel dcr Tiibingcr Augustincrkirche*, in Kenneth Hagen (cd.), *Augustine, the Harvest, and Theology (1300-1650)* (Leiden, 1990), 60-88.

[36] Obcrman, *Masters of the Reformation*, 175.

[37] Midelfort, *Witch Hunting,* 58-9, and for Catholic providcntialism in the German south-west, 58-64.

[31] Jodocus Lorichius, *Aberglaub. Das ist, kurtzlicherbericht, Von Verbottennen Segen, Artzneyen, Kunsten, vermeintem Gottsdienst, und andern spbttlichen beredungen,* 2nd cdn. (Freiburg, 1593), 4-5, 10, 33, 97-99, 113-21; Midelfort, *Witch Hunting.* 60-1. Cf. Reinhard Lutz, *WarhaJJlige Zeittung, Von Gottlosen Hexen, Audi Ketzerischen und TeuJJels Weibern, die zu Schlettstadt, des H. Römischen Reichsstadt in Elsass, aujf den XXII. Herbstmonat dess I570.Jahrs, von wegen ihrer schdndtlichen TeuJJelsverpflichtung, etc. sindt verbrennt worden* (1571), in *Theatrum de veneficis,* 1-11.

anxiety was that ordinary Catholics turned not to God or the Church in such cases but to ‘good’ witches; ‘they demand help’, he said, ‘from cunning women and little women-witches.’ Like their Protestant counterparts, therefore, they had to be persuaded that God allowed Bambergers to suffer demonic vexations and diseases for their own spiritual good (Sermon II). All of God’s attributes, above all his providence, were illustrated by this, many human virtues, especially patience, love of God and humility, were encouraged, and, as usual, faith was tested and sin punished (Sermon x). Forner listed the thirteen sins that unleashed demons and witches on errant Catholics (Sermons xn-xm) and the twenty-four pieces of‘armour’ that would protect them (Sermons xiv-xxxv). Many of the latter had no parallels in Protestantism, of course, but the cardinal preservatives at least were shared: a firm faith, an innocent life, and unshaken trust in God?[9] This was also the teaching of the Ingolstadt theologian and Jesuit Adam Tanner, who said that the best way to avoid *maleficium* was by hope and confidence, daily prayer, and purity of life; if God nevertheless permitted it, it was to be borne with the conviction that it was for the sufferers’ good in this life and the next.[40]

One of the important reasons why Protestant and Catholics converged in their handling of these issues was their common reliance on the early church fathers, notably St Augustine—a general feature of the thought and writing of the two reform movements.[41] Not content with mere citations, however, the French Catholic author Pierre Massé devoted a whole chapter of his demonology to a reprint of the one text to which the spiritualizers of witchcraft were particularly indebted, Augustine’s sermon on omens (the second for the twenty-first Sunday after Trinity).[42] Its theme was the keeping of faith in misfortune, and, like many sermons from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it attacked the resort to diviners and soothsayers by the spiritually weak-willed. Since this inevitably recalled the quite different behaviour ofjob, Augustine had in fact concentrated on misfortunes brought specifically by devils. This is why we have already encountered (and will again) so many of his arguments among the writers on demonology—reformers themselves, and with a theological commitment equal to his regarding the dispensations of providence and the spiritual challenge of being tested or corrected by tribulation. Catholics like Massé, as well as the Lutheran and Calvinist witchcraft writers, admired Augustine as the greatest exponent of the anti-Manichaeism that underlay their own campaigns against the unreformed spirituality of the European laity. In his sermon, Augustine reminded the afflicted that Job did not say, ‘The Lord gave, and the aW/hath taken away.’ This

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” **Forner, *Panoplia armaturae*** **10,17-29,94-100**

[40] **Tanner,**

was, in effect, what his early modern followers also saw as the essential spiritual lesson to be learned from demonism and witchcraft.[43]

In Spain, the anti-providential aspects of superstitious reactions to misfortune were analysed by Martin de Arles (the fifteenth-century canon of Pamplona) and the spiritual reasons for God's allowance of *maleficium* by Francesco de Osuna.[44] In France, the Jobian alternative to consulting *devins* was urged by the Minim Pierre Node and the Celestine Pierre Crespet. Crespet inserted it in the lengthy discussion of sin and its implications which opened his account of how the pious Catholic should avoid the devil's attentions.[45] Henri Boguet, too, appealed to Job in exhorting sufferers from *maleficium* to 'have recourse to God alone... who sends life and death, health and sickness'.[46] Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the issue occupied Catholic writers on witchcraft to quite the same extent as their Protestant rivals, who often spoke as if matters of conscience exhausted the subject. For this very reason, however, it is important to notice one other remarkable contribution to the debate about the spiritual and pastoral significance of *maleficium.* This is the Netherlands author Jacob Vallick's *Tooveren,* a fictional dialogue that depicts, in simple, everyday terms, the typical experiences of the village clergyman when confronting popular attitudes to affliction and witchcraft.[47]

It opens when 'Elizabeth' complains to her neighbour 'Mechtilde' that her horses and cows are sick, her butter will not come, and her husband is incapacitated *(unvermugen).* She fears bewitchment, naming both the suspected witch and the occasion when the troubles began. Vallick's response, through Mechtilde and the priest who later joins the conversation, is a model of the usual providentialism. It is a sign ofspiritual fickleness, he explains in a preface to his readers, to welcome God's good fortune while ascribing ill fortune to witches and devils, since, in effect, the latter is only a version of the former. Bearing the cross has positive benefits for the conscience because it purges complacency, whereas absence of adversity can be a sign of divine indifference. Misfortune is, thus, to be welcomed with gratitude. Besides, facile suspicion and false accusation, based on delusions and imaginings regarding the truth of things, might easily threaten innocent lives. The dialogue itself makes it clear that this is the case with Elizabeth who, through ignorance, rumour, and the tricks of

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[43] **Masse, *De rimposture,* fos. 96'-l 00'. Rene Bcnoist was another to translate and publish Augustine's sermons in order to attack magic and witchcraft: see his *Trois Sermons de S. Augustin ... Auquels il est enseigne que ceux qui adherent aux magics, sorceleries, superstitions et infestations diaboliques, pour neant sont Chrestienset abusent de leurfoy(\519),in* Masse, *De I imposture.***

[44] **Martin de Arles y Androsilla, *Tractatus de superstitionibus, contra maleficia seu sortilegia quae hodie vigent in orbe terrarum,* 3rd edn. (Rome, 1559), fos. 21'-3', 70'-l'. E. William Monter, *Frontiers of Heresy: The Spanish Inquisition from the Basque Lands to Sicily* (Cambridge, 1990), 256, gives first pub. as Lyons, 1510; Hansen, *Quellen,* 308, gives Paris, 1517; Osuna, *Flagellum diaboli,* fos. 10'-33'.**

[45] **Node, *Declamation,* 28-9; Crespet, *Deux Livres,* fos. 317'-37', esp. 319'-21'» 328'.**

[46] **Boguet, *Examen of Witches,* 114.**

[47] **On Vallick, see Willem Frijhoff, 'Jakob Vallick und Johann Weyer: Kampfgenossen, Konkurrenten oder Gegner?', in Lehmann and Ulbricht (eds.), *Fom Unfug des Hexen-Processes,* 65-88; id., 'Medecine au quotidien au pays de Cleves. Un dialogue de village en 1559', in *Symbole des Alltags: Alltag der Symbole. Fest für Harry Kuhnel zum 6S. Geburtstag* (Graz, 1992), 805-20.**

Satan, has falsely accused a pious and trusty neighbour. She is indeed bewitched, but in her understanding rather than her goods. Real *maleficium* can occur but only with God's allowance and through the devil's agency, who threatens the whole of humankind as he once threatened the individual Job. As Willem Frijhoff has remarked: 'The crucial point here is the recognition that bewitchment, just like the healing of the sickness, is a matter for the interior life'—the life of the spirit.[48]

There is thus an extraordinarily close resemblance between this tract (it was originally published in Dutch sometime around 1559) and Gifford's homespun *Dialogue,* which opens with just such a village confrontation, follows identical arguments, and ends with precisely the same cautions. The identity with Protestant views is so uncannily close that we have to keep reminding ourselves that Vallick was a Catholic priest of Grocssen on the borders of Cleves, a remote region otherwise little touched by any brand of reform. As long as there are texts like this to be found in the canon of early modern demonology the view that Protestants and Catholics shared exactly comparable evangelistic aims will command attention. This, however, is a problem that we must leave for a later chapter.[49]

" FrijhofF, 'Medecincau quotidicn', 815.

***' Jacob Vallick, *Tooveren, wat datvoor een II ere is. Hat crancheit schade en hinder, daer van comende is, ende wal remedial men daer loordoen sal.* The second edn. was at Hoorn, 1598; I have used the German version (slightly abridged) by an unknown translator, I^{z}on *Zduberem, Hexen, und Unholden. Fiimemlich aber was Zduberen fur ein II erck seye, was Kranckheit, Schade, und Hindernuss darauss erstehe. Auch was Gegen Artzney darwider zu gebrauchen seye,* in *Theatrum de veneficis,* 54-69. The first publication in German was in Cologne in 1576. A new edn. is being prepared by Willem FrijholT.**

31

Popular Magic

> Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor.
>
> (1 Samuel 28:7)

> Yea, and at this day, as the Ministers of God doe give resolution to the conscience in matters doubtfull and difficult: so the ministers of Satan, under the name of Wise-men, and Wise-women, are at hand, by his appointment, to resolve, direct, and helpe ignorant and unsetled persons, in cases of distraction, losse, or other outward calamities.
>
> (Thomas Pickering, ‘The Epistle Dedicatorie’, to Perkins, *Discourse)*

> The people therefore of our time, having the same drift and purpose with Saule, that is, with full sayle seeking after Sathan if he may be found, must be subject to the like (if God give not repentance) or the greater condemnation.
>
> (Henry Holland, *Treatise)*

If Job was the greatest demonological archetype in the sphere of religious conduct, King Saul was scarcely less significant. This is because Christians who failed to behave like the former were very likely to behave like the latter. For many people, spiritual consolations were undoubtedly a very real answer to affliction; it would be foolish to underestimate the success with which early modern religions coped at the mental level with the disasters and tribulations that befell the faithful. But in many other cases the advice we have just been surveying went unheeded, and more concrete steps were taken to prevent misfortune and alleviate distress. Study after study has shown how, all over Europe, ordinary people regularly appealed not to their own consciences, or to the collective conscience of the Church, but to local practitioners skilled in healing, divination, and astrology for help with their everyday problems. They did this frequently in cases of suspected *maleficium,* but any kind of misfortune, anticipated or experienced, could justify a visit to the ‘cunning’ man or woman. This is why Saul—the Saul who, on the eve of his fatal battle with the Philistines, asked a woman with a familiar spirit to summon up the dead Samuel for divination—also became a relevant Old Testament exemplar.[1]

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[1] For studies of local ‘magicians* and their clients, see above, Ch. 29 n. 9, and these more specialized treatments; Macfarlane, *Witchcraft.* 115-34; Clarke Garrett, ‘Witches and Cunning Folk in the Old Regime*, in J. Beauroy *et al.* (eds.), *The Wolf and the Lamb: Popular Culture in France from the Old Regime to the Twentieth Century* (Saratoga, Calif., 1976), 53-64; Monter, *Religion, Myth and Magic.* 47 and ch. 3 *passim’.* Briggs, *Communities of Belief.* 21-31; Klaniczay, *Uses of the Supernatural.* 129-50, esp. 143-4

To speak here of a simple choice between a resort to religion and a resort to magic is, of course, fraught with problems, not least because the terms are notoriously difficult to define, and carry with them misleading cultural assumptions.[2] In the situations just mentioned, the churches and their clergy could be appealed to for solutions that, in scope and content, were very like those expected of the 'cunning' profession; the parish priest who administered to his flock's material needs like an unofficial healer, diviner, or conjuror was by no means an uncommon figure? On the other hand, village healers and their like mixed religious elements into their formulas and rituals and sometimes expected a faith-like confidence in their clients. For these reasons alone, the precise blend of ingredients which generally made up the experience of misfortune and its redress in early modern societies is best left uncategorized.

Even so, it is impossible to make sense of much of the religious thought and writing of the period, and of clerical demonology in particular, without recognizing in it a fresh attempt to isolate what was *seen* as 'magical' in belief and behaviour and proscribe it for Christians. Whatever blurring of categories there had been in the medieval past, and however much this continued to influence experienced reality, the perception of an unbridgeable gulf between (what they saw as) religion and magic came to dominate the sensibilities of churchmen and their evangelical efforts. To the extent that services like healing, divination, and counter-witchcraft had become professionalized in the hands of 'cunning' practitioners, the churches were probably correct to think that they were being challenged by a rival institution. In the European countryside, in particular, the priest and the magician often confronted each other as rival therapists for the community's afflictions; in New Castile 'the wizards would hold matches with the local clergy to see who could best deal with the clouds.'[4] The important thing for the reader of demonology, however, is not so much the 'fit' between this situation and the texts, but the latter's ability to portray clerical intentions in the field of religious reform. 'Magical' (as we saw in an earlier context) is a word which it is virtually impossible for the modern observer to use as a simple predicate of past actions. But writers on demonology used it repeatedly and knew exactly

(central and southern Europe); /\bray, *People's Reformation.* 170-1 (Strasburg); Forster, *Counter-Reformation tn the Villages*, 236 (Speyer); Jean-Michel Sallmann, *Chercheurs de tresors et jeteuses de sorts. La Q^ete du sumatureld Naples au* xvi* siecle (Paris, 1986), 171-84; Burke, *Historical Anthropology.* 211-17 (Italy); Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch.* 128-61, see also 210-25 (south-east Naples); Hans de Waardt, *Tovenjensamenlevtng Holland 1 SOO-1800(Thz* Hague, 1991), 335-9 (English summary); id., 'From Cunning Man to Natural Healer, in Hans Binncvcld and Rudolf Dekker (cds) *Curing and Illness in Past Times* (Hilversum, 1993), 33-11 (Holland); Mary O'Neil, 'Missing Footprints: in Modena , and Stanislav Bylina, Magic, sorcellerie ct culture populairc en Pologne aux XV* clcs', both in/toa *EthnographicaHungarica.* 37 (1991-92), 123-42,173-90. Parallels with and opposition to it, m New England society arc found in Godbeer, *Devil's Dominion.*

[2] These were the of of

what they meant by it. This at least enables us to reconstruct the world of popular magic as they saw it.[5]

Two things in particular illustrate their determination to drive a wedge between religion and magic—between Job and Saul. One of them is simply the extent to which, contrary to our assumptions, their anxieties concerning the classic, maleficent, devil-worshipping witch—the witch of the 'witch hunts'—were often quite outweighed by their hostility towards the more mundane practitioners of popular magic. We open their writings expecting to find mainly denunciations of witches who made explicit pacts with devils, attended sabbats, and caused havoc by *maleficium',* instead, we discover—especially in Protestant texts—mainly denunciations of 'cunning' men and women, of *devins, conjureurs,* and *jeteurs* (and *leveurs) de sorts,* of *Wahrsager, Segcnspreclier* and *Zeichendeuter,* of *saltidadores* and *ensalmadores.* Evidently, those to whom the victims of *malejicium* appealed for fOHH/er-witchcraft were considered by their clerical mentors to be as much, perhaps more, of a threat than the witch who inflicted the original injury. Indeed, and this is the second thing to notice, they too were regarded as witches. Considered as an expression of religious values, much of the literature dealing with 'witchcraft' in early modern Europe was an attempt to demonologize the traditional resources favoured by ordinary people in need; an attempt, that is to say, to broaden the application of the term 'witch' to include those deemed to stand in the way of the complete pastoral hegemony of clergymen. 'A witch', wrote one of those who sought to monopolize definitions of wickedness, 'is but a wicked man or woman that worketh with the devill.'[6] The conjuror, the enchanter, the sorcerer, and the diviner, said another, were 'compassed' by the term 'witchcraft'.[7]

As elsewhere in this book, then, we are about to find that 'witchcraft' was constituted by a set of cultural practices—in this case, those of evangelical religious reformers. For this process, the Jacobean translation of Saul's pythonness as the 'witch' of Endor stands as an emblem. It is, therefore, our expectations that are at fault, not the texts for straying from the stereotypical witch that we, as much as any witchcraft theorist, have created. Moreover, not only did religious reformers see the 'witchcraft' they hated in contexts unlike those associated by historians with witch-*hunting*—they found it in places where witchcraft prosecutions were of negligible significance. Wales, for example, is a region that scarcely registers in the historiography of the so-called witch craze; and, indeed, very few trials for maleficent sorcery appear in its (surviving) judicial records. Yet for two hundred years or more Welsh clerics complained of the 'witchcraft' that, in their opinion, permeated the beliefs and lives of its people—a witchcraft consisting of appeals for help to (what in one text are called) wizards, astrologers, soothsayers, fortune-tellers, conjurors, charmers, and magicians.[8] In the Dutch Republic, trials for maleficent witchcraft ended soon after the beginning of the seventeenth century, whereas non-harmful or 'white' witchcraft—called, significantly, by the same name, *toverij*—continued to concern both magistrates and clergy until the beginning of the twentieth. This early cessation of the 'witch hunt' has received considerable historical attention; the continuation of Dutch interest in witchcraft in another guise has not.[9] In the Catholic areas of Europe relatively free from severe prosecutions dealing with the diabolism of the sabbat, notably Italy, Spain, and Portugal, generations of bishops and inquisitors made vigorous attempts to combat superstitions that (for reasons we shall eventually examine) they classed as just as demonic. In Portugal, for example, there was little intellectual interest in, and much scepticism about, the more sensational aspects of witchcraft, and virtually nothing of what we have come to think of as demonology. Yet theologians and clerics constantly, and increasingly, directed their efforts at the demonism they saw in ordinary people's attitudes to magic.[10] These are further instances of the way in which witchcraft beliefs—when we have put them back in the setting to which they belonged—tell a different story to the one we have been led to expect.

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[5] To remove any misunderstanding, wherever the words 'magic' and 'magical' occur in what follows they refer to what the authors under discussion meant when using them, and not to any meaning that might be imputed to me. In other words, they are employed as a matter of report, not of description.

[6] Holland, *Treatise,* sig. B3'.

[7] Gifford, *Discourse,* sig. Bii'.

The point applies strikingly to someone like Calvin himself, who is not usually regarded as having had much to say about witches or witchcraft. In 1555, however, he preached on the superstitious practices and divinations forbidden in the Mosaic laws in Deuteronomy, calling them 'witchcrafts (*sorcelleries*)' and exploring the demonic powers normally analysed in the witchcraft writings of clerics. He also wrote a commentary on the same text to show 'with how many monstrous and ridiculous fascinations Satan, whenever God loosens the chain by which he is bound, is able to bewitch unhappy men'.[11] Many things about witches were, indeed, incredible, he said in the sermon; Calvin was clearly not interested in witchcraft's exotic aspects. Nevertheless, in the perennial 'combat' between God's truths and Satan's illusions, 'We know that in all ages and in all nations the witches have prevailed, and prevailed so much the more when God’s truth was rejected.’[12] When the Bible spoke of‘enchantments’ and ‘witchcrafts’, therefore, it was in order to keep a tight rein on our behaviour, to keep us in obedience to God’s word, and to prevent us acting like King Saul in consulting ‘witches’. Calvin spoke of personal anguish and despair, quarrelling and anger between neighbours, and marital disputes as the causes of this kind of witchcraft:

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[8] The text is the dialogue written in Welsh by Robert Holland, entitled in a MS copy *Tvdyr ag Ronw (Tudor and Gronow)*, first published in the 1590s and repr. by Stephen Hughes in his 1681 edn. of Vicar Rhys Pritchard, *Cannwyll y Cymru (The Welshmen's Candle)*, and in Thomas Jones (ed.), *Rhyddiaith Gymraeg, 1547-1618* (Cardiff, 1956), 161-73. For an account of this text in the context of clerical attacks on popular magic, see Stuart Clark and P. T. J. Morgan, 'Religion and Magic in Elizabethan Wales: Robert Holland's Dialogue on Witchcraft', *J. Ecclesiastical Hist.* 27 (1976), 31-46.

[9] Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, 'Witchcraft in the Northern Netherlands', in Arina Angerman et al. (eds.), *Current Issues in Women's History* (London, 1989), 81-4; ead., 'The European Witchcraft Debate and the Dutch [illegible]', *Social Hist.* 15 (1990), 193. For new perspectives on the subject see the contributions to Gijswijt-Hofstra and Frijhoff (eds.), *Witchcraft in the Netherlands*, summarized in Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, 'Recent Witchcraft Research in the Low Countries', in N. C. F. van Sas and E. Witte (eds.), *Historical Research in the Low Countries* (The Hague, 1992), 23-34.

[10] I am most grateful to José Pedro de Matos Paiva for allowing me to see the preliminary results of his new research on Portuguese witchcraft beliefs. They confirm many of the points I make in this and the following two chapters.

[11] J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Last Four Books of Moses, Arranged in the Form of a Harmony*, trans. and ed. C. W. Bingham (4 vols.; Edinburgh, 1852-5), i. 429. An accurate account of Calvin's demonology, paying proper attention to his biblical commentaries, and to his emphasis on *divinatio* rather than *maleficium*, is Peter F. Jensen, 'Calvin and Witchcraft', *Reformed Theological Rev.* 34 (1975), 76-86.

> when a person is impatient, persists in quarelling to the point of despair, will no more be consoled, rejects all memory of God, and wishes that his name was forgotten; then Satan has an open door and comes to practise his illusions, and cannot be resisted. We have an excellent example of this in Saul... And what was the outcome? He went off after the witches.[13]

So strong was the condemnation in Deuteronomy, Calvin added, that there was no question of allowing witchcraft in a Christian society, and judges and magistrates should treat it as a capital offence, like murder. This sounds like the authentic voice of demonology, and indeed it is; there is not the slightest doubt that Calvin is talking about something *he* regards as witchcraft. But his remarks are directed throughout at popular magicians and their clientele, not at the more sensational witchcraft of the sabbat, which he describes in his commentary as an ‘imaginary’ assembly ‘to which unhappy men, whom the devil has bewitched, fancy themselves to be transported’.[14] Calvin, indeed, had exactly those ‘providentialist’ and ‘spiritualizing’ attitudes to witchcraft that were common throughout Protestant Europe.[15] An important change in historical perspective is required if we are not to miss the significance of this—as well as the significance of similar judgements by many other early modern clergymen.

* * *

The extent to which demonology was taken up with the condemnation of popular magic, rather than *maleficium* as such, is so marked in the case of the Protestant authors that they seem to have been preoccupied by the task. Naturally, they thought of it as a polemical duty enjoined on them, first and foremost, by the Bible and its order of priorities. The general view was that, as a New England divine was to say, ‘these divinations and operations are the Witchcraft more condemned in Scripture than the other.’[16] It was Richard Bernard’s opinion, for example, that the Bible showed that God disapproved of‘white’ witches much more than did ordinary folk, who feared only the ‘black’ variety; ‘all the names of Hebrew and Grecke in the old and new Testament’, he wrote, ‘runne upon such Witches, as the world doth follow after, rather then upon this hurting and cursing [witch].’[17]

The Mosaic law thought to be aimed specifically at malevolent witches was thus seen as only one ingredient in a code of behaviour directed at all the forbidden arts, however benevolent they might seem. More representative than Exodus 22: 18 (‘Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live’) was the text that Calvin chose to address in 1555, Deuteronomy 18: 10—11: ‘There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.’[18] This was the text that furnished the Protestant pastors with their demonological categories; or, if we prefer, into which they intruded their own vocabulary of terms by translation. It was continuously relied on for inspiration and support. Whole demonologies were laid out according to the types of magic Deuteronomy distinguished, notably the two very substantial treatises by Bernhard Albrecht and Niels Hemmingsen. Hermann Hamelmann, a leading Lutheran reformer of the Church in Westphalia, and *Generalsuperintendent* of Gandcrsheim in Brunswick at the time, delivered a sermon there in October 1570 which is drawn entirely from the list of practices in Deuteronomy. Naturally, Hamelmann denounced those who were clients of them in the Germany of his day and pleaded with his fellow pastors to make their eradication an evangelical priority.[19] Henry Holland’s *Treatise against witchcraft* opened with a long analysis of the eight types of‘witches which are mentioned in scripture’; all of them were taken from this one text, a further indication of the indiscriminate use of the label ‘witch’. In 1612, another Englishman drew together a discussion of village exorcists, healers, blessers, and conjurors by assimilating them to the Mosaic typology.[20]

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[12] Jean Calvin, ‘Sermon six sur le Deuteronomy chap, xviii. v. 10-15’ [2 Dec. 1555], in Opera, ed. G. Baum, E. Cunitz, and E. Reuss (59 vols.; Brunswick and Berlin, 1863-1900), xxvii. col. 510.

” Ibid. col. 511.

[14] Calvin, *Commentaries,*\. 428.

” Jensen, ‘Calvin and Witchcraft’, 81-3,85-6.

“ Hale, *Modest enquiry,* 426.

" Bernard, *Guide to grand-jury men,* 245 (Bernard did acknowledge the contemporary threat from types of malevolent witchcraft not mentioned in the Bible).

Unambiguously malevolent witchcraft, with its explicit demonic allegiance and acts of *maleficium,* was in fact rarely considered outside this framework. Holland sandwiched it between his exegesis of Deuteronomy and a chapter dealing with those who were ‘wont to seeke after these wise men, and cunning women ... in sickenesse, in losses, and in all extremities’.[21] Heinrich Bullinger placed it at the end of his *Von Hexen und Unholden,* having already considered the use of blessings, conjurations, and exorcisms *(Segnungen, Beschwörungeri),* the various astrological professions *(Stemseher, Tagweiler, Planelenprediger),* and the arts of necromancy and divination *(abgestorbenen Seelenfragen, Wahrsagen).* Johannes Riidingcr’s massive demonology, *De magia illicita,* included ten sermons on the magic and witchcraft of the explicit demonic pact but ten more on soothsaying, the ‘observation of days’, augury, conjuration, astrology, necromancy, and the interpretation of dreams. Two other works which began with traditional demonology and ended by demonologizing popular magic were *Der Zauber Teujfel,* by Ludwig Milichius, who taught at the Marburg

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[11] Cf. Leviticus 19: 31: ‘Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God’; Leviticus 20:6: ‘And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.’

*’ Hamelmann, *Eine Predict... Wider die Beschwerer.*

[20] Holland, *Treatise^* sigs. B3^{r}—D4^{r}; Mason, *Anatomie of.sorcerie$_{9}$* 85—8. Mason’s profession is unclear; his title-page refers to him as ‘M. A.’.

[21] Holland, *Treatise^* sig. F4'.

academy and was preacher at Seelhcim, then Homberg, and finally Corbach, and the witchcraft sermons which Hermann Samson, *Generalsuperintendent* of the Livonian Church from 1622, gave in Riga cathedral and published in 1628. Nor should it be forgotten that a substantial portion of Johann Weyer's *De praestigiis daemonum,* usually regarded as important for other reasons, was devoted to dismissing magical *cures* for bewitchment. Here, as in other respects, Weyer wrote rather typical—but undeclared—Lutheran demonology.[22]

Very often, classic devil-worshipping witchcraft was quite overshadowed by its (apparently) beneficent or 'white' counterpart. This was very much the case with *Hexen Coppel,* a tract from the 1620s by the Lutheran Johann Ellinger. Ellinger admitted that outright devil-worshippers were the essential witches but still numbered them as only two among twelve categories of the magical arts. Among the rest were some learned varieties—pyromantics, aeromantics, hydromantics, and geomantics—but also the familiar blessers, soothsayers, crystal-gazers, diviners, and exorcists.[23] George Gifford's *Dialogue* was also taken up largely with the role in Essex villages of what he revealingly called the 'other sort of Witches, whome the people call cunning men and wise women'—that is, the local experts in healing, divination, theft-detection, and counter-witchcraft.[24] It was on such figures and their moral and cultural significance in the community that the attention of Calvinist demonology in Tudor and Stuart England was concentrated. In some European contributions to the genre, witchcraft as traditionally understood virtually disappeared altogether. This was the case with the tracts on blessings and conjurations by two Wurttemberg pastors, Johann Spretcr of Trossingen and Conrad Platz of Biberach, and the sermons on soothsaying by the influential Palatinate reformer Abraham Scultetus.[25]

The literature attacking the agents of *nialeficiuni* thus blended imperceptibly into a more general campaign against those who provided both the immediate antidotes and many other arts and techniques on which ordinary lay people relied for their material and psychological welfare. At no point is it possible to say that demonology ended and some other way of representing the subject began. William Perkins spoke for all Protestants when he insisted that, 'by Witches we understand not those onely which kill and torment: but all Diviners, Charmers, Juglers, all Wizzards, commonly called wise men and wise women; ... and in the same number we reckon all good Witches, which doe no hurt, but good, which doe not spoile and destroy, but save and deliver.' Perkins was not unrepresentative of English opinion in also saying that, of the two kinds of witch, the 'good' was far worse than the 'bad indeed, ~~the~~ more horrible and detestable Monster’. This was because the devil was immediately responsible for *both* sets of actions (their ultimate justification being providential). The devil had set up ‘good’ witches alongside the ‘bad’ precisely so that the bewitched would resort to them—and so, in effect, to him for remedy, thus losing their spiritual integrity in the instant of rescuing themselves from material affliction. Cunning men and women, thought Perkins, did ‘a thousand fold more harme’ than ‘bad’ witches; they were ‘the right hand of the devill, by which he taketh and destroyeth the soules of men’. Next to Satan himself, the village wizard was ‘the greatest enemie to Gods name, worship, and glorie, that is in the world’.[24 * 26]

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[22] Midelfort, 'Johann Weyer and the Transformation of the Insanity Defense', 238-9.

[21] Ellinger, *HexenCoppel.* 45, and *passim.* [24] Gifford, *Dialogue,* sig. A3^{r}.

[25] Johann Spreter, *Eyn Kurtzer Bericht, was von den Abgdttenschen Sagen und* *Beschweren zühalten, wie deretlichvolbracht, unnddas die ein Zauberey.auchgreuwelvor Gott dem Hew* *seind* (Basel, 1543), on a text from Job 17; Platz, *Kurtzer... bericht*^ Abraham Scultetus, *Warnung für der Warsagerey der Zäuberer und Stemgiicker* (Neustadt, 1608), on the last four verses of Isaiah 47, with their “fcrcnc^^ ng James's version) 'enchantments', 'sorceries', 'astrologers', 'stargazers and monthly progno (Lutheran version: 'Beschworem', 'Zauberer', 'die Meister des Himmclslauss , die Stemkucker , and die nach de n Monaten rechnen').

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However exaggerated this sounds, it was typical of English thinking on witchcraft; the sentiments were shared, for example, by Gifford and by John Gaule. In fact, they were consistent with a general tendency, crucial to Protestantism, to spiritualize the experiences associated with witchcraft. Just as no one doubted the physical reality of the hurts that were popularly attributed to *maleficium,* so too it was accepted (leaving aside cases of fraud and trickery[27]) that real physical benefits could derive from consulting ‘cunning’ folk. Gifford, for example, conceded that clients were not only ‘unwitched’ but exorcized, healed of illnesses, and helped to find lost or stolen property. Nevertheless, the aim was to draw attention to the demonic (and, ultimately, providential) origins of these effects and so uncover a spiritual significance for them that was diametrically unlike their material aspects.

In the case of misfortune, and *maleficium* in particular, we saw that this was located in the opportunity provided for the afflicted to engage in spiritual self-scrutiny and amendment of the conscience. They were expected, like Job, to transform even the most grievous torments into beneficial experiences. One of the reasons, therefore, why the popular magicians aroused such hostility was simply because they prevented this happening. By offering immediate remedies and, in cases of suspected witchcraft, confirming suspicions against neighbours, they encouraged their customers, and the community in general, to go on thinking about misfortune in the ‘wrong’ terms—that is to say, as something concrete that could be blamed on somebody else and relieved by equally concrete means. ‘These [white] Witches’, wrote Richard Bernard,

> either breede, or nourish divelish and uncharitable conceits, in those that seeke unto them: as that they dwell by ill neighbours; that when any ill happeneth unto them, to theirs, or to their Cattell, that they are blasted, taken with an ill planet, strucken, that some ill thing went over them, that they are over-looked, forespoken, and bewitched by some one or other, and therefore they must seeke for helpe, and this must be of them, or of such as be like them, Wizards and Witches.[2’]

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[24] **Perkins, *Discourse,* 255-6,173-8.**

[27] **For a denunciation of wise men and women as frauds, see Anon., *The wonderful discoverie of the witchcrafts of Margaret and Phillip [pa] Flower, daughters of Joan Flower neere Sever Castle... Together with the severall examinations and confessions of Anne Baker, Joan Willimot, and Ellen Greene, witches in Leicestershire* (London, 1619), sig. B2ʳ.**

[21] **Bernard, *Guide to grand-jury men,* 139-40.**

Thomas Pickering, who introduced the posthumous editions of Perkins’s *Discourse* and who, like Gifford, was pastor of an Essex parish, spoke of a straight conflict between ministers of the Church who served the faithful by resolving difficult matters of conscience, and ministers of Satan (‘under the name of Wise-men, and Wise-women’) who served ‘ignorant and unsetled persons’ by resolving them’‘in cases of distraction, losse, or other outward calamities’. Like modern historians and anthropologists, these contemporaries understood that diagnoses of bewitchment by neighbourhood healers and divines were indispensable in sustaining the belief system that underpinned the popular notion of witchcraft.[29]

But while failure to learn the ‘right’ spiritual lessons from misfortune strengthened religious errors like infidelity and distrust of God, it did not lead to anything as serious as loss of the soul. For this to happen, it had to be emphasized that magical diagnoses and remedies not merely prevented clients from appreciating the true significance of their afflictions but entangled them with the devil, obliging them, as Henry Holland put it, to ‘seeke helpe of the same serpent that stung them’.[30] If the devil was, in reality, the bringer of the original misfortune, he was also, but more strikingly, responsible for the antidotes. Gifford explained that successful divination and the recovery of goods were made possible by hordes of fact-collecting demons; that charms worked because demons brought about the natural effects aimed at; that exorcisms occurred when demons left the possessed of their own accord; that the sick and bewitched were healed (other than psychosomatically) when devils ceased to torment them or took advantage of the natural termination of diseases. ‘They seeke unto divels’, he therefore concluded, ‘which run unto those soothsayers.’[31]

Ordinary people could be persuaded only with difficulty that the devil (and, so, God) lay behind the damage inflicted by the local witch—a causal supplement unfamiliar to them but not inherently implausible. But, like ‘Samuel’ in Gifford’s *Dialogue,* they were likely to reject out of hand this further idea of demonic responsibility for the *benefits* brought by the local magician. ‘Men’, lamented Perkins, ‘doe commonly hate and spit at the damnifying Sorcerer, as unworthie to live among them; whereas the other is so deare unto them, that they hold themselves and their country blessed that have him among them.’[32] This, indeed, served only to underline the greater threat of the latter; by a simple and highly successful deception the devil healed the body while harming the soul. It followed, as Gifford put it, that where ‘Satan offereth his helpe, it is more to be feared, then where he manifestly impugneth, and seeketh apparantly to hurt.’[33] This was the sort of logic that resulted when spiritual considerations were given absolute priority, many of Gifford’s ordinary parishioners may well have seen it as paradoxical.

The sin that imperilled the souls of magicians and clients alike was nothing less than idolatry. Blessers, said James Mason, ‘dishonour God, and discredit his word,

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” **Perkins, *Discourse,* ‘The Epistle Dedicatorie’, sig. 1?; cf. MacFarlane, ‘A Tudor Anthropologist’, 145.**

[10] **Holland, *Treatise,* sig. F4r.**

” **Perkins, *Discourse,* 256.**

n ***Gtfort, Dialogue,*^*. Fi'-Hi* (quotation at Fi’).**

” **Gifford, *Dialogue,* sig. F3'; cf. Holland, *Treatise,* sig. Glr.**

arrogating unto themselves, that which is proper unto God, asking oftentimes when any commeth unto them, whether they do beleeve, that these wizzards can do that for them, which they come for'.[34] Gifford explained that Saul, like all subsequent clients, had set the devil in God's place, and honoured him as God, in asking advice of the 'witch' of Endor. Perkins agreed that men and women depended on the 'white' witch 'as their God'.[35] From here, it was really no great distance to the most serious claim of all—that to practise beneficent magic, or to patronize those who did, was to make at least an implicit pact with the devil and, thus, to be just as much a witch as any bringer of *maleficium.* With some attention to the niceties of this particular case of conscience, John Gaule argued that to resort to cunning folk implied 'in the party to be thus holpen, cither a Petition, or at least an inquisition: cither a persuasion, or at least an expectation; which is a faith or assent of the same nature that the Witch now works by.' It was true, he admitted, that those who served the devil openly and in personal contact with him were more 'notorious and audacious' and had committed themselves permanently to witchcraft. By comparison the 'Consulted and 'Practised of benevolent magic were initial and temporary adherents. In time, however, their demonism would harden and develop into the full version. In any case, they were much more numerous and, in this respect at least, a more pressing pastoral problem. For every witch, warned Gaule, 'so become after an explicite manner of Covenanting, more then ten of them are guilty after the Implicite and Invisible way oncly'.[36]

◆ * *

The notion of the implicit pact was absolutely fundamental to clerical demonology and it will reappear in many more contexts. Important, too, are the other than spiritual reasons why the devil was thought to be involved in benevolent as well as malevolent magical transactions—a question best postponed until 'superstition' becomes an issue. But for the moment it should not be thought that the English Calvinists were anything but typical of European Protestant opinion in their treatment of the Saul syndrome. Everywhere, the pastors of the new religion demonized the agents of popular magic, condemned their clients as 'pagans' and 'heathens', and accused them of being witches.[37]

In 1565, for example, the pastor of Biberach in Wurttemberg, Conrad Platz, published a virulent denunciation of popular blessers and conjurors *(Segensprecher, Beschwörer)* which exactly paralleled the English texts. Bemoaning the inconstancy [54] * * * * * * * that led men to abandon God in serious illness, Platz focused on their recourse to those who claimed to heal by the power of words—for him (as, necessarily, for all Protestant writers on demonology) the very worst kind of superstition. For the sick to turn their backs on providence and on the legitimate human skills of physicians was bad enough, since it showed lack of patience, lack of trust, and lack of belief. But to put faith in the promises of blessers—a prerequisite for the success of their charms—was also a hideous travesty of the doctrine of salvation. And to claim that holy words in particular had an inherent efficacy was an outright rejection of the second Commandment. If success was obtained, if children and livestock in fact recovered, this was by demonic intervention and should not be taken as a gain but as a loss—as a *punishment* for lack of steadfastness in affliction. The pious, wrote Platz, ‘should prefer a thousand times to be ill and miserable in God, than to be bright and healthy with the devil, to die in God, than to survive with the devil, to have sick horses, oxen and sheep or to have none at all, than to have strong, healthy, well-made horses and other beasts with the devil’s help and by means of devilish conjurations and blessings’.-”[1] It was one thing to say the words of blessing over the baptized child as part of a formal ceremony, and quite another to bless adults and cows in the home and in the fields; one thing to speak of the ‘power’ of prayers and sermons, but quite another to attribute to utterances a material efficacy. Christ had healed and exorcized by pronouncing words, but the modern charmers and exorcists fell short of this ‘not by a peasant’s shoe but by more than a hundred well-measured German miles’. He was, after all, said Platz without irony, the son of God?’

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[54] Mason, *Anatomic of torcerie,* 2-3, sec also 25.

” Gifford, *Dialogue,* sig. F2'; Perkins, *Discourse,* 256; cf. Holland, Treatire Gl'

" G~au C" [illegible] 31 "2 '72_4_see al5 159_ For Gaule's own account of astrological magic, see his *The mag-astro-mancer, or the mag,call-astrolog,call-diviner posed, and puzzled* (London 1652), 165-80.

[17] In addition to the examples that follow, sec Gr-Gir; Daneau, *Dialogue,* sig. Kviir; *Zauberem,* 27-35;

Niels Hcmmingscn published the single most important Danish contribution to the witchcraft debate in Copenhagen in 1575. *WisAdmonitio de superstitionibus tnagicis vitandis* opened by defining magic as a belief in the physical power of symbols, especially words. Because the power of words—above all, the Word—was only semantic, the efficacy of popular magic must be totally specious, its results depending on purely natural interventions by those demons with whom, expressly or implicitly, the magicians in question were in league. Like Platz, Hemmingsen also argued that the same degree of impiety resided in all magical effects, helpful as well as harmful; if the body was indeed healed, then a ‘leprosy’ was placed in the soul instead. Following his initial discussion of magic and affliction, he devoted the bulk of his treatise to a detailed analysis of six of the types of arts condemned in Deuteronomy 18: divination, prestidigitation, augury, *maleficium,* incantation by words or gestures, and beneficent magic.[40] Usually it is their popular applications he has in mind, hence his concluding advice to pastors. Above all, they must destroy the common belief that the sin of those who practise magic with good intent (MZ *opem afflict us ferant)* is less than that of those who resort to outright witchcraft; ‘For faith in the divine promises chokes in the hearts not only of those who practise *magia* but also of those others who seem to heal by the magicians art. ’ ’[41]

” Platz, *Kurtzer... bericht,* sigs. Fin-Fix'.” Ibid. sigs. Fv’-Fvii', Fviii'-Gi', Gii’-GiV.

[40] Hemmingsen, *Admonilio,* sigs. G3’-M3^{r}.

[41] Ibid. sig. N l^{r}; for other relevant passages, sec sigs. -Lo. C4'

A final Protestant example, Bernhard Albrecht's *Magia* of 1628, was something of a summation of the Lutheran tradition of witchcraft studies. He himself traced it to the views he had heard in Wittenberg and Jena well over thirty years before, citing many other Lutheran pastors and theologians as his authorities. To some degree, the treatise seems to balance a concern for the devil-worship of the 'black' witch *(Hexe)* with the newly emphasized hostility to the 'white' equivalents. Albrecht devotes a substantial chapter to the usual agenda of questions regarding flying, the sabbat, copulation with devils, metamorphosis, and, of course, *maleficium.*[*1] Again, however, it is benevolent magic that dominates the discussion. Taking his categories from Deuteronomy 18, Albrecht spends most of the rest of a sizeable book analysing the individual practitioners of popular techniques for procuring good fortune—*Beschwdrer, Segensprecher, Zeichendeuter, IVahrsager,* and the like. In each case the task is to separate out the residue of licit practices from the mass of'superstitions'. Blessings are appropriate between pastor and flock, or before meals, or at the deathbed; they should not be hung round the necks of livestock or buried under thresholds. Days are in some sense special if marked by notable spiritual events, but not in the sense of the *Tagwdhler,* who plots the daily co-ordinates of propitiousness.[43] Albrecht's knowledge of the usages he condemns is circumstantial; his section on (what he calls) 'the superstitious' reads like an ethnography of Ascension Day, Good Friday, and baptism rituals. He also writes in the usual way (sketched in my last chapter) about the real nature of affliction and the proper responses to it. But what is remarkable in his book is the sheer weight of the attention given to the everyday practices of those who understood affliction and redress in very different terms.

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There is even less reason to expect any marked denominational difference in clerical attitudes to the magical services available to early modern Europeans than there was in the case of attitudes to *malejicitnn.* Catholic theologians could appeal more easily to their later medieval colleagues, but condemnations of popular magicians went back far enough to constitute a common heritage.[44] Protestants and Catholics were 'equally vehement in their hostility to popular magic', reports Keith Thomas, 'and both denounced it in terms which would have been approved by their medieval predecessors'.[45] The theme is a constant and insistent one at least from 1398, when several of the articles against superstition that were issued by the theology faculty of the university of Paris alluded to magical techniques, to at least 1679, which saw the first edition of the *Traité des superstitions* by the Jansenist *abbé,* Jean-Baptiste Thiers. What happened in between—as far as the world of official Catholic pronouncements was concerned—is clear enough, not least because Thiers himself wrote its history. In council after council, synod after synod, from St Malo to Milan, and from York to Narbonne, bishops and their staffs denounced the diviners, astrologers, soothsayers, and healers in whom too many of the Catholic laity allegedly trusted for their health

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[42] Albrecht, *Magia,* 186-235. [42] Ibid. 40-1,70-4.

[44] For medieval condemnations of magic, see Kicckhefer, Afagtr, pamm, esp. 10,38-9,80,181-7.

[4,] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 258, see also 499 ff.

and good fortune. By one typical church council, that of Bordeaux in 1583, *cures* were ordered to warn their parishioners ‘that those who are involved with magic and divination or who place their trust in diviners commit a horrible crime and are excommunicated.’[46]

The very substantial casuistical literature of early modern Catholicism, together with its many new catechisms, is full of similar judgements, which must therefore have informed the drive for a new piety.[47] Martin de Arles and, later, the two Germans Jodocus Lorichius and Pierre Binsfeld linked superstition to witchcraft via the practices of popular magicians and the expectations of their clients—in Binsfeld’s case, in a guide to priests. Martin de Arles, for example, complained that the kingdom of Navarre was full of*pythonissae* and necromancers to whom the people flocked for prophecies and the finding of lost or stolen goods; both they and their clients were guilty of apostasy from the faith and would incur the wrath of God for their implicit demonic pact.[4S] The Spaniard Francisco Peña’s annotations to Nicolas Eymerich’s fourteenth-century inquisitors’ manual indicate that diviners and soothsayers *(sortilegiiy divinatores)* could trouble Counter-Reformation clerics as much as their Protestant enemies. Eymcrich had established that they were heretics even without any demonic sacrifice, since it was apostasy to do anything ‘in which the accomplishment of the task is anticipated by the aid of the devil’.[49] But Pedro Ciruclo’s *Reprobation de las supersticiones y hechicerias* (?1530), which went through twelve editions and was still being recommended in 1628, shows that Catholic theologians did not need T rent to tell them that the entire range of popular magical practices was offensive to the faith. Ciruelo spoke of all Spanish folk healers as ‘enchanters’ *(ensaltnos)* because even when they came nearest to orthodoxy—when they added ‘recognized medical remedies’ to ‘honest and sacred words’—they (and their clients) assumed that ‘the total curative power’ came from both. They were thus destroyers of souls, even if they helped with bodily afflictions (the remedies working through Satan’s occult activity and knowledge):

> Since this is true, any man or woman who seeks a cure through spells tacitly accepts a return to health with the aid of the devil and thus makes a pact of friendship with the enemy of God and man. ... Apostasy calls down the wrath and anger of God upon such an individual and his household. One day he will experience punishment at God’s hand, and that punishment will be an affliction much greater than the one healed by the devil bj' means of the lips and hands of the enchanter.

In the seventeenth century, Ciruclo’s editor Jofrcu called this pertinent and funda-

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[44] Jean-Baptiste Thiers, *Traite des superstitions* (2nd cdn.; 4 vols.; Avignon, 1777), l. 44; this edition, the second in 4 vols., combines the original treatise (vol. i) with Thiers’s account of the superstitions connected with each of the sacraments, first pub. 1703-4 (vols. ii-iv).

[47] Sec below, Chs. 32 and 33.

[41] *de Ar\csy AndrosiihyTractatusdesuperstitionibustos.3y^\.*

” Nicolas Eymcrich, *Direclorium inquisitorum ... cum scholtis seuannotalionibus erudtttssimu D. Francis" Pegnae Hisfiani* (Rome, 1578), 88-9 (2nd pagination); for a translation of Eymench s two *quaesUones*, sec Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Law,* 197-202 (my quotation at 199).

mental doctrine’ and added that magicians’ clients should be made aware that ‘the greatest offense they can commit against God is to have no confidence in Him.’[50]

From all quarters of Catholic Europe came monographs and sermons attacking the magical experts and their clients in these terms; from Jacob van Hoogstraten (professor of theology, Dominican prior, and inquisitor) in Cologne, Jean Glapion (Franciscan and Charles V’s confessor) in Nancy in 1520, Johannes David (Jesuit) in the Netherlands, and Manuel Vale de Moura (theologian and inquisitor at Evora) in Portugal.[51] The two dialogues by George Gifford and Jacob Vallick denounced counter-witchcraft in unconsciously ecumenical terms—as the breeder of suspicion and injustice among superstitious villagers. Pierre Masse’s *De l’imposture et tromperie des diables* was an extended discussion of the sinfulness of the *devins* and astrologers, the wearers of amulets and the interpreters of dreams, who seemed to be as popular in sixteenth-century France as in pagan times. Each Sunday, reported Masse, it was the tradition that the parish priest, before performing the sacrifice of the mass, should turn to his congregation and order ‘diviners, witches, enchanters and other malefic persons’ to leave the church.[52] Finally, most of the major surveys of demonology published by Catholic churchmen reserved a place for denunciations of the popular magical arts; this is true, for example, of *Malleus maleficarum,* and the later works by Osuna, Crespet, Del Rio, and Forncr. It was Christ’s express wish, wrote Sebastien Michaelis, that the clergy ‘should be in direct opposition against Magicians’. The Catholic lawyers, too, took the opportunity to join in the chorus of condemnation.[53]

Typical of this extensive anti-magical literature are the remarks of the authors of *Malleus maleficarum* when acknowledging that ‘the common method in practice of taking off a bewitchment, although it is quite unlawful, is for bewitched persons to resort to wise women, by whom they are frequently cured, and not by priests or exorcists.’ These ‘witches’ (the conflation is as clear as in the Protestant texts) were, they continue, plentiful in the German countryside and specialized in revealing the origins of *maleficium* in quarrels between neighbours. There were many of them in the

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[50] **Ciruclo, *Treatise.* 207-10.**

[51] **Jacob van Hoogstraten, *Tractatus magistralis declarans quant graviterpercent querentes auxilium a maleficis* (Cologne, 1510); Jean Glapion, *Contre les sorciers et les sorcieres et ceux qui vont aux devins et devineresses,* an Easter sermon summarized by Andre Godin, ‘La Societe au xvi* siecle, vue par J. Glapion (1460?—1522), frere mineur, confesseur de Charles-Quint*, *Revue du Nord.* 46 (182) (1964), 353-4; for Johannes David, *Schild-wacht tot seker waerschouwinghe teghen de valsche waersegghers, tooveraers ende derghelijeke ongoddelijekheydt* (Sentinel for warning against the false cunning men and witches and suchlike ungodliness) (Antwerp, 1602), see Marcel Gielis, ‘The Netherlandic Theologians’ Views of Witchcraft and the Devil’s Pact’, in Gijswijt-Hofstra and (eds.), *Witchcraft in the***

Manuel Vale de Moura, *De incantationibus seu ensalmis* 1620). See also

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diocese of Constance, where Krämer and Sprenger said that they had witnessed the crowds that attended sorcerers, even in the worst weather, yet neglected the Church's shrines. Those who did this were evidently ‘thinking more of their bodily health than of God’, who would punish them as he punished Saul in the same circumstances. To complicate matters, there were those in the Church itself who (the authors conceded) were prepared to tolerate this kind of remedy for bewitchment, although not Aquinas, Bonaventura, ‘and all the theologians’. The solution to this disagreement was first to rule out three versions of counter-witchcraft as altogether unlawful, though in different degrees. These were the removal of witchcraft by further spell-casting, its removal by ‘some honest person’ but its transference to another victim, and its removal by non-transference but still by some tacitly demonic means. This left a borderline category—that of ‘superstitious’ remedies, where there was ‘no pact either open or tacit with the devil as regards the intention or purpose of the practitioner’. In fact, the usual Catholic attitude to superstition was that it was always at least tacitly demonic, whether intentionally or not. The authors of the *Malleus* concluded, therefore, that here too practitioners must be ‘led into the way of penitence’ and urged to use only the therapies of the Church. But ‘superstition’ was clearly a complicated matter for them to unravel and we must turn to the reasons why this might have been so.[54]

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[54] [Krämer and Sprenger], *Malleus maleficarum*, 334-50.

32

Superstition

> Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.
>
> (Acts, 17:22)

> ... the similitude of superstition to religion makes it the more deformed.
>
> (Francis Bacon, ‘Of Superstition’)

So far, we have seen ordinary people in two of the roles that most concerned those who were anxious to save them from religious error—first, as victims of misfortune (whether *maleficium* or any other kind), and secondly, as clients of ‘magicians’. But there is a third role to consider, and in many ways it is the one of most consequence. In the nature of things, the aid of experts in ‘magic’ was never likely to supplant self-help as the unreformed individual’s primary resource. And, indeed, there is every indication that ordinary Europeans could draw privately on a versatile repertoire of communally shared protections and remedies for coping with the contingencies of daily life. Again, this is not the place to rehearse in full the ethnography of these aspects of popular culture.[1] The significant point has been made by Robert Muchcmbled; that, while experts in healing, divination, counter-witchcraft, and so on, existed in most communities, the techniques they employed, as well as the assumptions they relied on, were, in principle, accessible to all.[2] We arrive then, at the ‘average Christian’ in his or her most all-embracing capacity—as the personal user of any practice designed to bring good fortune, and avoid or mitigate bad.

In these routine matters of daily life, where the individual’s conscience was potentially open to constant inspection and guidance—like a text being interpreted, said one cleric already familiar to us[3]—the religious reformers of early modern Europe showed very considerable interest. The improvement of lay behaviour presupposed that men and women could learn, through instruction and self-examination, to act rightly by treating their individual actions as moral cases resolvable in terms of rules of conduct, ‘calibrating’ (it has been said) particular circumstances against general precepts.[4] They were expected, as a preparation for confession and communion, to weigh their actions with a new exactitude, judging the motives behind them,
ing the contexts in which they were taken, and calculating possible sins

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[1] See the items cited above, Ch. 29 n. 9, Ch. 31 n. 1.

[2] Muchcmbled, *Popular Culture,* 92; id. *La Sorciere au village: xr-XVIIr*

their precise number, type, and significance. The clergy were there to offer the necessary assistance, with or without the confessional, and they in turn were guided by a literature dealing with the model workings of perfect consciences in ideal-typical situations. Edmund Leites has said that the Catholic Church’s commitment in this area of social control was ‘massive’ but that casuistical writings were also vital to the Protestant cause in Germany and in England. Between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, he writes, ‘church-sponsored casuistry was a culturally dominant force in the West.’[5] Of the dilemmas that were dealt with, most significance, if not notoriety, now attaches to those stemming from divided religious and other allegiances and from secular practices such as usury. But casuistical taxonomy was supposedly complete and its coverage universal. Practical moral theology’ on this scale therefore embraced cases arising from daily needs and common afflictions and, in particular, the seemingly constant popular demand for techniques that would ward off misfortune in the present and ensure some knowledge of, and control over, the future. To the great issues of public controversy in the age of the reformations were therefore added the moral problems of coping with *maleficium* and resorting to magic. Here there was no need for sophistry.

Naturally, the clerical casuists applied exactly the same criteria of propriety and impropriety to this area of behaviour as the clerical writers on witchcraft. They were engaged in the same general campaign to strengthen lay piety and stigmatize incorrect beliefs and conduct, and they drew on the same theological principles in doing so. To casuistical demonology, then, we can add demonological casuistry, the ground shared by them being as extensive as in the other areas of overlap studied in this book. Just as clerical writers on witchcraft and popular magic saw these subjects in essentially spiritual terms as problems for the conscience, so experts on the conscience frequently gave advice about the sins of witchcraft and magic. Protestant audiences all over Europe may well have been taught their demonology via this parallel textual and evangelical route—for example, in works like Fridrich Balduin’s *Tractatus de casibus conscientiae,* which took all the standard topoi of witchcraft theory’ and turned them into cases of conscience, or Ludvig Dunte’s *Decisiones mille et sex casuum conscientiae.*[6] The Catholic contribution too was voluminous, especially after the Council of Trent, and following the educational and pastoral commitments of the Jesuits, where casuistry took a ‘central place’.[7] It comprised three main (overlapping) categories: first, the great collections of moral questions by Jesuits like Domingo de Soto, Thomas Sanchez, Franciscus Suarez, Leonardus Lessius, and Juan Azor; then, the manuals on cases of conscience addressed to priests, like the much reprinted *Summa casuum conscientiae* (in some editions called *Instructio sacerdotum)* by Cardinal Toledo, the Benedictine Gregory Sayer’s *Clavis regia sacerdotum.* or Martin de Azpilcueta’s *Enchiridion, sive manuale confessariorum. et poenitentium*, and finally, the many instruction books for, and usually by, inquisitors.

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[5] Edmund Leites, ‘Casuistry and Character’, in id. (ed.), *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1988), 119-20, and in the same vol., Johann P. Sommerville, ‘The “New Art of Lying”: Equivocation, Mental Reservation, and Casuistry’, 159, who says that casuistry ‘was the dominant form of moral theorizing in late medieval and early modern Europe.’ Cf. Albert R. Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin, *The Abuse of Casuistry: A History of Moral Reasoning* (London, 1988), 137-75, where casuistry is said to have reached full maturity between the mid-16th and mid-17th c., with ‘an immense outpouring of casuistical literature’ (143). The texts belonging to the earlier phase of casuistry’s growing popularity are dealt with by Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton, 1977), 28-53, and, more briefly, by Delumeau, *Sin and Fear,* 198-205. For the concept of ‘discipline’, with which casuistry was closely linked, see Bossy, *Christianity,* 126-40, and for the conscience as the ‘bearer of man’s relationship to God’ in Luther, see Bernhard Lohse, ‘Conscience and Authority in Luther’, in Heiko A. Oberman (ed.), *Luther and the Dawn of the Modern Era* (Leiden, 1974), 158-83.

[6] Balduin, *Tractatus... casibus nimirum conscientiae,* 425-61, for a conventional account of the nature and powers of demons, and 531-72, for cases of conscience arising from actions ‘cum magis et veneficis’; Ludvig Dunte, *Decisiones mille et sex casuum conscientiae: Das ist kurz und richtige Erorterung Ein Tausend*

These indispensable aids to the reformation of the laity contain some of the most substantial and influential discussions of demonism available anywhere in early modern culture. It is worth speculating, though impossible to decide, how much of what they said found its way into the consciences and lives of pious individuals. What is certain is that, in every case, the sin against which lay people were warned was that of superstition. We shall see that many of the activities of the professional magicians also fell into this category. Superstition, indeed, was one of the catch-all terms in religious discourse. Nevertheless, its broadest reference was to the kind of behaviour we are now considering—that of individual Christians seeking success and security in their daily lives by their own efforts.

* * *

‘Superstition’ is a key concept in the history of early modern culture. This is emphatically not because it has often been employed retrospectively to *describe* the beliefs and behaviour of that period.[8] This is a usage that ought to be entirely abandoned, assuming as it does that there are some social facts that we ourselves can uncontentiously label ‘superstitions’ in regard to essential and perennial traits. Today’s ‘superstitions’ might appear to bear this assumption out, for moral censure has largely disappeared from our everyday attitudes to them. But the history of superstition has largely been one of cultural disapproval and exclusion, however benign; and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in particular, the term ‘superstitious’ had strongly negative, not to say lethal, connotations. For us to use it descriptively amounts either to taking sides in the cultural disputes of the age or ignoring their existence. The challenge, then, is to use the word as a matter of *report*—as, indeed, we must if we are to give an adequate account of the history of these disputes—without committing ourselves to any of its meanings.

Superstition is a key concept, rather, because it was immensely important to contemporaries more so, arguably, than at any other time in European history.[9] It was important because it embraced the three things with which this particular sequence

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und Sechs Gewissens Fragen (Lübeck, 1664), 220–34, for many of the topics of conventional witchcraft theory (first pub. 1636).

[7] Jonsen and Toulmin, [illegible] *of Casuistry*, 146–51.

[8] F[illegible] see [illegible]'s [illegible] *World*, 20[illegible] 27 [illegible] 30 [illegible] grounds', 61.

[9] For comparisons with medieval views, the essential guide is Dieter Harmening, *Superstitio: Über-*

of chapters is concerned—reformation, acculturation, demonology. First, it defined in the broadest theological and moral terms what religious reformation was actually about. Following St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas, the clerics who led the great reform movements thought of superstition as among the most serious (often *the* most serious) of religious transgressions.[10] It was the very antithesis of true religious worship and seen as a fundamental obstacle to success. Many Protestants saw it as the sin that had destroyed that special Old Testament relationship between the Lord and his people. In Catholic casuistry it was 'religion's opposite'; indeed—to recall a type of arguing discussed earlier in this book—it was religion's contrary.[11] As we shall see in the next chapter, it was also always classed as a sin against the first Table of the Decalogue and, usually, the first Commandment. This made it, with sins like blasphemy and impiety, the greatest of all moral vices.

In the second place, the concept of superstition was a cultural weapon directed by churchmen mainly at the populace at large (although also, of course, at their clerical competitors). It was a form of proscription in terms of which many of the apparently routine actions and utterances of ordinary people, together with the categories and beliefs that shaped their experience, were denounced as valueless. It was not entirely this, however. Adopting distinctions codified in Aquinas's theological *summit,* the Catholic casuists allowed for two broad types of superstition, one consisting in service to the true God but in some inappropriate or incorrect manner, the other in service to a false god but in the manner due to the true. It was customary to subdivide the first of these into *cultus falsus* and *cultus superjluis.* The usual explanation (given, for example, by Toledo, Lcssius, and Sayer) was that the first occurred when God was honoured either with invalid ceremonies, like those derived from Mosaic law and the customs of infidels and heretics, or with ceremonies based on false relics and miracles. The second arose when the worshipper went beyond what was customary and official in the liturgy of the Church by, for example, multiplying its rituals, or attaching unwarranted significance to matters of ritual detail, or, as one Englishman expressed it, putting religion 'where none is'.[12] At this point, Aquinas had warned against a disproportionate attention to 'mere externals' that had no connection with interior spirituality. Protestant theologians naturally thought it possible to extend this idea to much of Catholicism itself. Summarizing more than a century of polemics, the Basel professor Joannes Wollcbius wrote that it was superstitious

> when a certain force and efficacy is ascribed to external Rites commanded by God, as if it were for the work wrought. As when force is attributed to certain words, voices, and writings to

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liejerungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des MitteMter$^xVvn,W13).

[10] **Indispensable for the medieval associations of magic and ^itchcraftwi th superstition is Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Lav,passim,* esp. pp. xiv-xvi 4-6,78-81,95-8,1J8-48.1W.**

[11] **Martin de Azpilcueta, *Enchiridion, site manuale confessartorum, etpoemtentsum,* in id., *Commentana, et tractatus huc* [illegible] *que edi* [illegible] 3 vols. in 1; Venice, 1588), fo. 40; Ludovicus López, *Instructorium conscientiae* (2 vols.; SalamanX 1592J), i. 1 IS (first pub. 1585); Gregory Sayer, *Clams regta sacerdotum, casuum consctentiae* (Venice, 1615), 230.**

[11] **Bernard, *Christian see to thy conscience,* 201.**

> drive away Satan, to cure diseases, etc. When they feign that there is in the Sacraments a venue by themselves to free us from sin, and to save us: When they think by their babhng and multitude of words, and such like to please God, when they judge one day, or one kind of meat holier than another, when they think to merit by their Vowes.[13]

The important point here concerns not what the post-Tridentine Catholic theologians would obviously* have rejected in this attack but the extent to which they adopted the same criterion. They* too complained of things like saying many’ alleluias when one was enough, or thinking more about the exact number, colour, and siting of candles than of their meaning as ritual symbols.[14]

In the first of its two manifestations, then, superstition meant either irrelevant or excess worship, provoked (so it was said) by* ignorance and fear of God. Here the status of any’ broader lay culture of fortune and misfortune does not seem to be at issue. There was, after all, a very old tradition of interpreting superstitious behaviour as exaggerated or over-scrupulous piety’ and this was reinforced not merely’ by* the Protestant Reformation but by several of the Council of Trent’s decrees.[15] On the other hand, it seems highly likely that laymen and laywomen associated the additional repetition of items of church ritual and the use of para-liturgical formulas with their secular and material well-being, as well as other benefits; getting them just right, it was believed, had implications for health, fertility’, and good fortune. To call this ‘superstitious’ could, therefore, already connote the proscription of many popular ways of thinking and acting in the sphere of personal welfare.

In the case of the second broad type of superstition—that of according the right service to the wrong object—this emphasis is much clearer, indeed dominant. This is because, in addition to examining idolatry’ as such under this heading, the theologians (again following Aquinas) went on to divide it into two additional branches of idolatrous observance, each with w’ide-ranging practical applications in lay culture. Each of the three subdivisions of this branch of superstition was, in fact, defined as a perversion of one of the three principal aspects of true worship. Just as true worship began with reverence for God, so idolatry* in and for itself—transferring this reverence to a creature—was its opposite. But religion was also concerned with ways of knowing and ways of living, and superstition must accordingly’ embrace corrupt forms of these too: ‘Secondly,’ Aquinas had said, ‘in worshipping God man looks to him for instruction; the opposite of this act of religion is foretelling the future ... Thirdly, divine worship offers us certain rules of action prescribed by the God w*e worship; opposed to this are various superstitious practices.’[16]

” **Wollebius, *The abridgment of Christian divinitie.* 355.**

. ? J?rancisco^c Toledo [Tolctusl./fw/nzrnorarrrJorum (Douai J 622) 590-1
***rials,* n. 458, written before 1565; first pub. 1599, with many later**
cardinalibus **Sayer**

Idolatria, divinatio, vana observantia. Aquinas and his early modern imitators thus arrived at a typology of illicit behaviour capable of absorbing whole areas of popular life and thought. Their breakdown of the types bears this out. Idolatry properly so-called was seen partly in theologically abstract or historical terms, and partly as the fundamental issue in the contemporary debate about images. It was the great sin of the Old Testament and other ancient cults, and it still arose whenever Catholics treated images not as signs but as objects of worship. But far greater attention was given to divination and 'vain observance', since these were taken to embody the two main reasons for practising idolatry. Here, the ground covered was very extensive. Foretelling the future had some licit varieties, and disentangling these from the superstitious forms involved the casuists in discussions of all the technical forms of divination (geomancy, hydromancy, pyromancy, aeromancy, etc.), together with astrologj', the interpretation of dreams, the study of auguries and omens, and the casting of lots. Here, even attention to the most banal forms of luck or ill luck qualified as a sin, since, as the English divine Perkins pointed out, superstition in this context was to have a false opinion 'of the workes of Gods providence', and providence, by definition, covered everything.[17] 'Vain observance' too was broad enough to cover virtually the whole of general conduct. Most commentators continued to examine the four areas specified by Aquinas. These were the acquisition of knowledge by means of rituals like prayers and fasts (usually known as *ars notoria),* superstitious practices affecting bodily health *(observantia sanitation),* attempts to foretell good or bad fortune from present signs *(observantia eventuum),* and the mistreatment of relics *(observantia reliquiarion).* ™

These already accounted for many popular forms of healing, where techniques based on astrological lore and the power of charms and ciphers w'ere prevalent. They also covered the equally widespread beliefs regarding omens and portents, and propitiousness. And they dealt again with that grey area where the times, places, persons, and things of religion were subject to creative adaptation by the laity for material ends.[19] Even so, the theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries usually went beyond Aquinas and broadened 'vain observance' still further by including in it, or allying it with, magic *(niagia).* At this point, superstition became one of the most comprehensive taboos in early modern Catholicism. It also took on

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Ingolstadt, 1591-7), iii. col. 1924; Jacobus Simancas, *Instilutiones* Ca,bo ‘ca fac brev, tat *quibus ordine diseritur quitquid adpraecavendas cl extirpandas haereses necessanum est* (Valladolid, 1552), fo. ccx , and on divination, idolatry, witchcraft, and sorcery, see fos. lxix'-lxxii', cxvi'-cxvin'^cxxx'-cxxxiu, ccx (a so part repr. as 'De lamiis' in *Malleus maleficarum* (1669 edn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 2). lao-7.

” William Perkins, *A golden chaine: or, the description of theologie,* in id., *The workes* (3 vols.; London, 1616–18), i. 4

" Tokdo^/m/mr/io MWAM 595-99 *(divinatio),* 600-1*(vana observantia);* Lessius, *Dejustitia,* 566-79; Sayer, *Clavis regia sacerdotum,* 233-40 *(divinatio), T-^-^vana observantia).*

*' See the sins discussed by Azpilcueta (Navarrus], *Enchiridion,* fos. 40 -2, Thoma Sanchez, *p Q us morale in praecebta decalogi site summa casuum conscientiae* (2 vols.; Pans and Antwerp, 1615-1622), I. 326-32; Hermann Busenbaum, *Medulla theologiae moralisfacih ac perspicua methodo resolvens casus conscientiae* (Cologne, 1688), 101; (many earlier and later edns.) Bernard, *Christian see to thy conscience,* 198-210.

far more sinister connotations than anything deemed superstitious in modern behaviour—which is also why historians should now reject this term as one of their own descriptive labels. For the third and last reason why superstition was so significant in the Europe of the witch trials was that it was demonic. And it is important to notice that the moralists and inquisitors stressed this at every point in their guides to idolatry, and not just where overt dealings with devils were allowed for. Practitioners of ancient religions, whose 'gods' were false, were obviously devil-worshippers. So too were necromantic diviners. So too, of course, were witches—for a further consequence of adding *tnagia* to the categories of superstition was the inclusion of *tnaleficiuin* too—as one of the forms of magic. Toledo added it after *observantia reliquiarum* as a last 'vain observance', as did the inquisitor Albcrghini and the Benedictine Gregory Sayer, who called it *praecipua* and followed with a brief, conventional witchcraft treatise.[20] Bishop Pierre Binsfeld, when he reached this point, simply referred his priestly readers to his own very substantial demonology, the *Tractatusde confessionibus tnaleficoriiin et sagarum.*[21] Gregorius de Valentia divided 'vain observances' themselves into those designed to be beneficial and those, including witchcraft, designed to hurt. For Lessius this was the choice within magic.[22]

Whatever the precise schematization employed, the addition of *maleficium* to superstitious behaviour underlined its explicitly idolatrous content. But this should not divert attention from the way that demonism was thought to inhere in all superstitious behaviour that relied on the power of creatures. According to Aquinas, superstition included not only explicitly idolatrous, sacrificial service to the demonic powers, but also 'invoking their help in order to know or do something'.[23] All the results of divination, not knowable in the normal way, were (in this view) learnt from devils. All the effects of'vain observance' were also produced by them. 'All types of superstitions,' repeated Ciruelo early in the sixteenth century, 'come from evil spirits ... the devil has discovered and taught men all superstitions'.[24] To indulge in them was to transfer to him the spiritual allegiance promised at baptism to God, to become a religious traitor and apostate—one did not have to go to sabbats, evidently, to do this. The universal view was that, like the specialist magicians, superstitious individuals were witches in another guise, their real sin camouflaged by their good intentions. Without knowing it, they too had entered a pact with the devil, a pact (we

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[illegible] *do'um*, 601-3; Albcrghini, *Manuale qualificatorum sanctiss. Inquisitions*, 134-58; *Sayer, Clavis regia sacerdotum*, 244-9.

[21] Pierre Binsfeld's *Enchiridion theologiaepastoraliset doctrinae necessariae administrantibus* (Trier, 1594) was reprinted in many further edns. and versions; I have used edn., Za *Theologie des pasteurs et autres prestres ayant charge des antes,* trans. P. Bermyer 314–27, see esp. 325.

[22] Valentia,

recall) that was said to be ‘tacit’ or ‘implicit’, to distinguish it from the ‘open’ or ‘express’ agreement that witches intent on evil were assumed to enter into

Since the devil appeared so prominently in the literature of superstition, it is not after all, surprising to discover the superstitious in the literature of demonology Del Rio’s discussion of ‘vain observance’ reads as a standard account of the sins of those who sought illicitly for good fortune, bodily health, knowledge, or spiritual gain. Indeed, the whole structure of his *Disquisitiones ntagicarum* obeys the Thomistic subdivisions of superstition, making it more a book about that subject than on ‘demonology’.[25] Torreblanca gave an orthodox breakdown of superstitions at the end of book I of his *Daemonologia,* and Binsfeld included another (with many examples) when he came to discuss lack of faith as one of the reasons for the increase in witchcraft.[26] The tacit pact of the superstitious was, likewise, an ingredient of the demonologies of Valdcrrama and Forner.[27]

What does, however, need examination is the precise reason why superstitious beliefs and actions should have been deemed demonic, as opposed to the (relentless) assertion *that* they were and the citing of supporting testimony from the Old Testament onwards. The general reason was commonplace enough: behind the greatest sins must lie God’s greatest antagonist. But what was it that made superstitions that were not overtly idolatrous technically equivalent to those that were? Those people targeted by the accusation might have argued plausibly enough that there was rather a large gap between the overt behaviour and its terrible moral significance. Why was the simplest charm or the most common blessing a sign of entry into a pact with Satan? What made everyday decisions based on propitious or unpropitious moments acts of spiritual treason? The same questions arose concerning the local magical practitioners and ‘cunning’ folk: what made them worshippers of a false god? In fact, we are also taken back to our starting-point in the arguments about the powerlessness of witches; why was *maleficium* not their responsibilty but the responsibility of demons? The demonologizing of popular culture turned very largely on the moral status of these routine transactions of practical life. What, then, was wrong with them?

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The answer lies in their natural inefficacy. Supporting the moral edifice of ‘superstition’, and thus the entire campaign to improve the cultural habits of the laity, was a version of the naturalism explored in an earlier section of this book. The essential criterion of an implicitly idolatrous superstition—a superstition in the spheres of knowledge and practical activity—was that it was faulty *in nature.* It was as a consequence of this that it was faulty in religion. ‘Natural’ and ‘superstitious’ thus became opposed terms in the language of early modern science and religion and so in

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[11] **E. Fischer, *Die 'Duquiiitionum magicarum tibri sex' von Martin DelRto als Gegenreformatorische Z"mpel-Quelle* (Hanover, 1975), 26, notices that the work begins by defi*rung* sup erstition' bu neglects ,ts overall structure. See also the influence of the Thomistic categories in [Kramer and p g J> S ren er *Malleus* "M/'A<»w,61,67-9.**

[26] **TotTeblanca, *Daemonologia,* 155-65; Binsfeld, *Tractatus,* 129—38.**

” **Valderrama, *Hictoire generate,* bk. 3,181-2; Forner, *Panopha armaturae De.,* 48-76.**

demonology.[28] It was assumed (we recall) that everything in the creation—the human beings who acted on it, as well as the things on which they acted—had been given its own attributes, virtues, and properties. Any effect lying beyond these various capacities could only be achieved, or even hoped for, if some agency with the ability to substitute alternative efficacies was also involved. In the case of an allowable effect, like a miracle, the agency was deemed to be religious and the intentions and expectations were said to be appropriate to true worship. Otherwise, the agency was demonic and the intentions and expectations were, in effect, idolatrous. It was devils, then, that made good the causal lacunae that opened up whenever the unallowable intentions of human agents exceeded the limits of natural efficacy; the devil was, thus, the *causa efficiens* of whatever resulted in such cases. This applied equally to malevolent witches, to the ‘cunning’ profession, and to superstitious individuals. ‘Whatsoever’, resolved Jospch Hall in his study of casuistry, that ‘hath not a cause in nature according to Gods ordinary way must be wrought either by good or evill spirits’. Angels would not help ignorant and vicious people to do things ‘by meanes altogether in themselves incffcctable and unwarrantable’. The ‘unseene hand’ of the devil was thus at work, seconding what had been agreed upon by implication.[29]

As in so many other things, the authors we are now considering found the reason why demonic force was ‘auxiliary’ to superstition codified in Aquinas:

> When things arc used in order to produce an effect, we have to ask whether this is produced naturally. If the answer is yes, then to use them so will not be unlawful, since we may rightly employ natural causes for their proper effects. But if they seem unable to produce the effects in question naturally, it follows that they are being used for the purpose of producing them, not as causes, but only as signs, so that they come under the head of a compact entered into with the demonic.[30]

This association of at least tacit demonism with natural inefficacy continued into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, transmitted from scholasticism via authoritative academic pronouncements on superstition like that of the Paris theology' faculty in 1398 or through the writings of earlier reformers like Gerson, Dionysius the Carthusian, Jacob van Hoogstraten, and Martin de Arles.[31] Indeed, it was still being debated as a case of conscience by the theologians at the Sorbonne in 1700 [32] Discussion often occurred in the context of formal commentary on Aquinas, as,'for example, in the cases of Lcssius and the Ingolstadt theologian Gregorius de Valentia (both Jesuits), and the Italian Dominicans Silvestro Da Prierio and Tommaso De Vio (Cardinal Cajetan). The implicit pact occurred, according to Valentia, 'whenever anyone employs, as capable of effecting something, such means as are in the truth of the matter empty and useless'.[33] What Jacobus Simancas called 'the general rule' on the subject was stated in his *Institutiones Catliolicae,* one of the most frequently cited of all inquisitors' manuals: 'Those things that cannot naturally bring about the effects for which they are employed are superstitions, and belong to a pact entered into with devils.'[34] The distinction between a cause and a sign was also repeatedly utilized. Superstitious means, because they caused nothing, were tokens of another kind of efficacy, they were, indeed, sacraments of a kind—pledges of a covenant with the devil:

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[28] An example from natural philosophy is Mairhofer, *De principiis discemendi philosophiam veram recondiuoremque sigs* A2'-A3'. Cf. Grillando, *Traclatus de sorlilegiis,* in *Malleus maleficarum* (1669 edn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 2) 255-6; Torreblanca, *Daemonologia,* 196-7; Pizzurini, *Enchiridion exorcisticum,* 17.

[29] Joseph Hall, *Cases ofconsciencepractically resolved,* 3rd edn. (London 1654) 175.

[30] Aquinas, *Summa theologian* xi. 75, see also 9.

[31] Jean G,?non'. De TMribut *circa artem magicam,* in *Malleus maleficarum* (1669 edn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 2). 163-78 (for the Pans arttcles, see 171-5); Dionysus Carthusianus [Dionysius de Leuwis'de Rickeil, *Contra villa superstitwnum quibus circa cultum veri Dei erratur,* in id., *Opera omnia* (44 nts • Montreuil, 1896-1935), 36.211-29; Arles y Androsilla, *Traclatus de supersiHionibus,* fos 6^, 17r-v, 44r-45r. Fol a survey of Gerson’s writings on superstition see France Bonney, ’Autour deJean Gerson: Opinions de theologienssur les superstitionset la sorcelleneau debut du xv* *siidt',LeMoyen Age* 77(1971) 85-98 On Gerson and Dionysius, together with the general transmission ofAugustinian and Thomistic ideas on this subject, see Gielis, ‘Netherlandic Theologians’ Views of Witchcraft’, 44–5, 49, and *passim*; cf. Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Law*, 143–8.

> Thedcril aims most of all to resemble God, even in this; that just as God works various effects of grace principally by means of outward sacraments and sacramentals, not through the sufficiency of suitable natural causes but through the efficacy of the signs, so too the devil happily brings about some effects by employing means that, to men, arc, in the truth of the matter, insufficient, using them in the same way as certain signs of the effect that he wishes to produce.[35]

If we return to the various sub-types of idolatrous superstition, we can see that each was dependent on the principle that the natural behaviour of 'creatures' had ascertainable limits. Toledo was typical of Tridcntinc casuists in defining *divinatio* as any attempt, unassisted by divine revelation, to know things 'that cannot be known naturalistically *(per naturainy.* The devil was invoked whenever methods of acquiring knowledge assumed causal connections in nature that did not exist or intellective capacities that humans did not possess. In the field of action, *vana observantia* occurred whenever human agents employed means which had no natural ability, and no divine sanction, to bring about the effects that were expected.[36] It was impossible, said Lcssius, to gain knowledge from fasts and the inspection of figures *(inspectiones Jigurarum)',* impossible to heal diseases, stem blood, or lessen pains through the ritual use of words, or by applying amulets; impossible to deduce what future good or ill would befall a person from things that happened fortuitously in the present.[37] Del Rio's two criteria for suspecting a 'vain observance' relied, likewise, on natural inefficacy (or other causal inadequacy) and on the attention paid to purposeless rituals in the circumstances of any action. Under the first he was able to condemn faith-healing, ‘effects’ wrought by signs, amulets and ligatures with no natural medical properties, omens drawn from accidental encounters, the observing of propitious and unpropitious times for collecting herbs, cutting wood, or making voyages, and a whole number of miscellaneous cures for illness like urinating through wedding rings to avoid impotence or measuring the girth of the sick person to see which saint to appeal to.[38]

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[32] **Adrien Augustin de Bussy de Delamet, *Le Diclionaire des cas de conscience* (2 vols.; Pans, 1733), ii. cols. 1309-10, cfcols. 15-20.**

n 1 V^emh,^ *ntariorum theologicorum,* iii. "1.1985; cf. Sayer, *Claris regia sacerdotum,* 241.

[34] **Simancas, *Institutiones Catholicae, fo. ccx*.***

[35] **Valentia, *Commentariorumtheologicorum.xu.* col. 1986. 711**

*** Toledo, *Imtructio sacerdotum.* 596,600; cf. Del Rio, *Disquisitiones magicarum.* 231.**

[37] **Lcssius, *De justitia.* 578—9.**

As broad in its range of inefficacies was *magia,* for ‘magic’ too was said to be involved in any attempt to do ‘that which is above nature’.[39] The keepers of conscience, like most other early modern intellectuals, allowed for a natural form of magic, but they concentrated on those powers to cause wonderful natural effects which were deemed to be spurious. The distinction between ‘vain observance’ and ‘magic’ was, in fact, based partly on the different intentions of the practitioners and partly on the quality of the effects they hoped to achieve; it was not an ontological or epistemological distinction. The first was associated typically with the unreflective and untutored pursuit of very mundane things—a healthier body, a more productive crop, a happier life; the second with self-consciously learned attempts to produce wonders and other spectacular phenomena. What they shared was inefficacy itself—a reliance on ‘such means as are neither by themselves nor by supernatural power able to produce such effects’.[40] All the various idolatrous superstitions might, therefore, vary in their aims—their final causes—but their efficient, or rather their deficient, causes were identical.

Pedro Ciruelo’s rule for the identification of ‘vain, superstitious, and diabolical’ works was another influential application of the inefficacy principle. It was originally offered as a help to the taking of confessions and, in Catalonia a hundred years later, still recognized by the Jesuit Vincente Navarro and the jurist Pedro Jofreu as invaluable to those ‘who deal with the Forum of the conscience ... and with matters which concern the Inquisition’:

> The rule is this: in every action which man performs to bring about some good or avoid some evil, if the things that he uses or the words that he employs possess neither natural nor supernatural power to bring about the desired effect, then that action is vain, superstitious, and diabolical; and the effect which is produced comes from the secret operation of the devil.[41]

This also was the view of those Catholic authors who offered a set of five rules for the identification of superstitions. This was commonly in use in the later sixteenth century, when Pierre Binsfeld, the Bishop of Trier, included it in his much reprinted manual for priests. There is also a version in the
Aberglaub, a work consisting largely of long lists of
ination, astrology, charming, and as

judging them to be superstitious and, thus, demonic. It is simply 'whether an object is associated with an effect which it has neither in nature nor from the consecration of the Church'.[42]

Protestant casuistry on the subject of inefficacy was no less emphatic, even if its notions of 'consecration' were very different. It is neatly illustrated in William Ames's *Conscience with the power and cases thereof,* at the point where he considers the sin of consulting the devil. This occurs not merely 'by a direct petition, or by an expresse compact' but 'by a silent and implicite compact' whenever 'those meanes are used, either for the knowing or effecting of things which have no such use by their owne nature, nor by the ordinance of God; and no extraordinarie operation of God with them can be expected by Faith'. In such cases, 'the Devill is the author both of the operations, and significations which doe depend on such meanes, and ... is consulted with by them that doe expect any thing in such waies.' Ames considers the two examples of astrology and the 'vaine observations' of the 'simple, ignorant, and credulous common people'. Since the stars do influence inferior things in a general way, it lies within nature to make general predictions from their movements (just as it does in cases of predictions 'taken from the elements, from the frame of the members of mans body, from dreames, from prodigies, &c'). But particular predictions concerning future contingencies and, especially, the voluntary actions of individuals are not warrantable in nature and are therefore demonic. Likewise, the demonism of the 'common people' consists in their associating causes and effects that do not belong together in nature; for example, conjecturing 'some joyfull, or sad events, upon some accidentall words or deeds aforegoing', counting saints' days as lucky or unlucky 'to beginne any worke in', attributing material efficacy 'to certaine formes of prayer, and to conditions annexed to them, for the procuring of this, or that singular thing', employing 'Figures, Images, Characters, Charmes, or Writings' to drive away diseases, or ascribing effects to 'Herbes, and other Medicines, not as they are applyed in a naturall way, but as they be charmed, or as they bee used in some certaine forme and no other'.[43]

These distinctions between efficacy and inefficacy in nature were the intellectual foundation of Protestant attitudes to superstition and the occasion for its 'demonization'. In England it was repeatedly stressed that countryside healers and blessers ignored the fact that God had given everything in the world, as one writer put it, 'a severall nature, vertue, and property, to be wrought, or to worke this or that effect (if it be rightly used and applyed) the which it is not possible for any creature in the world to alter, or change, but onely for the creator'.[44] It was in these terms that

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« Lorichius, *riberglaub,* 15; cf. Binsfdd, *Theologie des pasteurs,* 326-7 (and id., *Tractatus,* 137-8); Prieur, *Dialogue de la lycanthropie,* fos. 66'-7'. For further Catholic statements, see Azpilcueta, *Enchiridion,* fo. 40'-; Vale de Moura, *De incantationibus,* 61; Thiers, *Traite des superstitions,* i. 70-80, with examples at 81-7, and further summary rules at 232-3.

« William Ames, *Conscience with the power and cases thereof* (n.p., 1639), bk. 4,28-31 (also published in a Latin edn. of 1630).

[44] Mason, *Anatomie of wreerie,* 2-3,17.

William Perkins turned the working of wonders by ‘Spells, Charmes, Inchantments, etc.’ into a case of conscience involving adoration of wicked spirits.[45] Another minister begged his churchwardens to present to the church courts not only the local cunning folk but their clients too. Anybody, he explained, who used words and prayers superstitiously, that is, believing in their natural efficacy, was invoking the devil in principle; if the effects resulted, the devil was at work in fact, for there was simply no other way they could have come about.[46] In Denmark, Hemmingsen defined a ‘magical superstition’ as ‘anything that comes from the Devil, through the medium of human beings, by whatever [efficacy] is imagined to be in words, signs, figures, and characters, whether an express agreement with the Devil occurs or not.’[47] Ursinus’s commentary on the Heidelberg catechism again made it clear to Calvinists throughout Europe that superstition was a matter of attributing effects to ‘certaine things, or observations of gestures or words, as depend not either on natural, or moral reason, or on the word of god, and either doe not at al followe and fal out, or are wrought by the Divels’.[48]

In Lutheran Germany, in sermon collections like those of Abraham Scultetus and Bernhard Albrecht, it was argued that magic (and thus at least an implicit version of witchcraft) occurred:

> when anyone uses something in God’s creation, such as herbs, wood, stones, words, times, hours, gestures and the like, or seeks to bring about some effect, other than God has decreed, with the assistance and support of devils, either to reveal hidden or future things, or to obtain unnatural things, supposedly to help a neighbour.

What Albrecht meant by God’s decree was that each created thing had been given ‘its nature, virtue, power, and efficacy *(verrichtung)*.'* Specialist treatments of individual superstitions, like the Schmalkalden superintendent Christoph Vischer’s tract on blessings, simply elaborated on this. It was superstitious, said Vischer, to use words alone to cure illnesses, because this was ‘against their natural efficacy *(wirkung)*’. It was superstitious, agreed Johannes Riidingcr, the pastor of Weyra in Saxony, to regard days or hours as lucky or unlucky, since ‘there is no reason for this in nature’. Caspar Pcucer’s hugely successful mid-sixteenth-century study of divination rested heavily on the distinction between the legitimate prediction of effects from the natural properties with which things were endowed (‘natural divination’) and the superstitious abuse of the natural order in supposing it to contain causal relationships that were non-existent (‘diabolical divination’).[50] [44] *

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[45] William Perkins, *The whole treatise of the cases of conscience* (London, 1636), 207, see also 89–93 on possessions and hauntings (many earlier edns.).

[44] Bernard, *Guide to grand-jury men,* sig. A6^{r}, 120-1.

[47] Hemmingsen, *Admonitio,* sig. Bl*.

[48] Ursinus, *Summe of christian religion*, 819; cf. Praetorius, *Von Zauberey und Zauberern*, 8–12, 32–5.

[49] Albrecht, *Magia*, 10–11, 22; cf. Scultetus, *Warnung für der Warsagerey*, 5–6.

[50] Vischer, *Einfeltiger ... Bericht wider den ... Segen*, sig. Dvii^{v}; Rüdinger, *Decas concionum secunda*, 110; Peucer, *Commentarius de praecipuis divinationum generibus*, *passim*, esp. fos. 21^{r}–31^{r}, 67^{r}–96^{v}, 96^{v} ff. and (on witchcraft) 168^{r}–9^{v}.

The Lutheran casuists summed up these ideas for pastors and laypeople alike. 'things that have no cause either in nature or by divine institution', advised Dunte, 'are performed by magic, and the first inventors of such superstitions made a pact with the devil, who bound himself to be present with his works in such superstitious observances.'[51] According to the general superintendent of the Coburg churches in the mid-seventeenth century, Andreas Kesler, writing a *Gewissensfrage* on the correct remedies for ill-health, the 'wise men and women' to whom Lutherans in the principality still resorted 'use not natural, but unnatural, not godly, but devilish means, and have learned their black art from the black spirit from hell, the devil'. Superstitious medicine, he added, was 'witchcraft in miniature *(die kleine Hexerey)*', and sick men and women should be careful to use only philosophically 'natural things', approved of by theologians.[52]

* * *

It is worth pausing over these questions of classification and definition to notice two things. The first concerns the purpose central to all the discussions—the inclusion of witchcraft *within* the category of 'superstition'. Ostensibly this was because it was an example of giving the right kind of service to the wrong kind of object. But we should pay attention to where exactly in the classificatory scheme witchcraft was deemed by the theologians to fit. If overt devil-worship (for example, at witches' sabbats) had been the casuists' main concern, then witchcraft would presumably have appeared under *idolatria* pure and simple. In fact, it was classified within, or alongside, *vana observantia* (there are some variations in this respect), where the devil was only thought to be served at all because such practices had no intrinsic natural (or otherwise approved) efficacy. What *hechizerias* meant in Spanish, said Ciruelo, *vana observantia* meant in Latin.[53] Witchcraft was a 'superstition', then, because the causes it appeared to rest on were spurious, and those who believed such causes to be real—whether as practitioners or as victims and accusers—were 'superstitious' people.

For this reason, the historian needs to be even more vigilant in the matter of words than I suggested earlier on. For, once witchcraft had eventually been rejected as unreal, and witchcraft beliefs as irrational—let us say, during the 'long' eighteenth century[54]—it became commonplace among rationalists to attribute such beliefs to the consequences of 'superstition', where this again connoted ignorance about the workings of natural causation. Believers in witchcraft, it was said then, had shown superstition in misattributing effects that were perfectly natural to the actions of witches. Any attempt to define witchcraft as a ‘superstition’ during the previous two centuries looks, therefore, like a significant anticipation of the later, more ‘enlightened’, attitude to the crime by implying that it had no reality. The danger here, however, lies in mixing up the theological concept of superstition with a later secular one.[55] During the eighteenth century and after it was felt that it was the theologians *themselves* who had been superstitious, for trying to defend precisely the views I have been summarizing in this chapter. But early modern theological (and legal) opinion itself extended ‘superstition’ only as far as it was needed to account for misattributions of efficacy amongst the laity; there remained something real called ‘witchcraft’, practised through an, at least implicit, pact with devils, and to believe *this* was not only not superstitious—it was the height of orthodoxy. Moreover, it was an orthodoxy expressed in a multitude of authoritarian settings. Witchcraft was the ‘vilest’ of superstitions according to *Malleus malejicarum*—hardly a text to doubt its reality for all that.[56] Likewise, Calvin knew only too well that none of the magical arts condemned in the Old Testament had any causal basis of their own and that all of them were, in this sense, superstitious. But it was an ‘impudent blasphemy’, he said, to deny that they had been *practised,* since this would mean accusing God of forbidding things that did not exist.[57] The Catholic jurist Johann Christoph Fickler qualified at Ingolstadt in 1592 holding the same view; *maleftcium* he defined as ‘an extremely harmful and illusory [superstition], by which a person seeks to effect or obtain something by invoking the devil’s help and employement’.[58] In Catholic witchcraft theory this remained the view at least until Thiers, who was still including maleficent diabolism within the Thomistic typology of superstition in 1679.[59] The idea that the theology of superstition might somehow have anticipated rational enlightenment about witchcraft does not, therefore, seem plausible. For this reason, we should always beware of intruding the post-Enlightenment meaning of‘superstition’ into any of its earlier uses.[60]

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[51] Dunte, *Decisiones mille et sex casuum conscientiae*, 220.

[52] Andreas Kesler, *Theologia casuum conscientiae ... Das ist: Schriftmässige und Aussführliche Erörterung unterschiedener denckwürdiger, und fürnehmlich auff die gegenwärtige Zeit gerichteter Gewissens-Fragen* (Wittenberg, 1651), 353-69.

[53] Ciruelo, *Treatise*, 183.

[54] Reaching back to about the mid-17th c. in the case of Peter Burke, who makes the same distinction as mine between reformers of popular culture before 1650 who denounced magic and witchcraft as 'superstitious' but believed in their (demonic) efficacy, and reformers after 1650 (like Bekker) who denounced them as 'superstitious' because they had no efficacy: *Popular Culture*, 241. On the later phases of the attack on 'superstition', see Monter, *Ritual, Myth and Magic*, 29; Jean-Marie Goulemot, 'Demons, merveilles et philosophie à l'âge classique', *Annales E.S.C.* 35 (1980), 1223-50.

Even so, the problem is not so easily resolved. For before the casuistry and demonology of the sixteenth century settled into the Thomist patterns I have described, it had been possible—following the pronouncements of the *Cation episcopi*—to argue that some at least of the aspects of witchcraft later believed to be real by the theologically orthodox were in fact unreal and that to believe in *them* was

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” This important distinction is also made by Stronks, ‘Significance of Balthasar Bekker’s *The Enchanted ll'orld*[1], 154-5, by Klaits, *Servants of Satan,* 174 (referring to popular notions of witchcraft), and by Burke, *Historical Anthropology,* 218.

[54] [Kramer and *Sprcngcr], Malleus maleficarum,* 70. ” Calvin, *Commentaries,* i. 429.

” Andreas Fachineus, *praeses* (Johann Christoph Ficklcr, *respondent), Disputatio juridica, de maleficis et sagis, ut vocant* (Ingolstadt, 1592), 2.

” Thiers, *Traili des superstitions,* i. 113-29; Thiers nevertheless thought that the attribution of this kind of witchcraft to any individual must be done with extreme care. See also Monter, *Ritual, Myth and Magic,* 114-29, where the distinction I am drawing is presented as the difference between Thiers and Pierre Lebrun, on the one hand, and Pierre Bayle, on the other.

[40] As, perhaps, docs Monter, *Witchcraft,* 31, when he comments that Calvin ‘ruthlessly condemned many forms of superstition, but witchcraft was not one of them’.

superstitious. The most important of these were the flight of witches to sabbats and, thus, the sabbats themselves. This was the view, for example, in the *Sennones discipuli* of the fifteenth-century Dominican Johannes Herolt, in Samuel de Cassini's *Questione de le strie,* and in the very popular alphabet of casuistry by the vicar-general of the Italian Franciscans, Angelo Carlctti (Angclus Carletus), as well in Martin de Aries's study of superstition.[61] [62] Thus, the boundaries of superstition could be shifted to and fro even within the world of theology, depending on what was thought believable and what not. One possible interpretation of this is to say that writers on demonology could be as critical in their attitude to natural knowledge as were later intellectuals with different natural philosophies—a feature I emphasized in Part II. The category of'superstition' was, evidently, a malleable one and its later extension to cover the whole of witchcraft beliefs, rather than a particular portion of them, constituted a change of degree not of kind. Alternatively, one could argue that such plasticity was a dangerous precedent, from which root-and-branch abolitionists learned how to argue. The very thoroughness with which superstitions (of any sort, and of any persons) were denounced as vacuous established a language of rejection that could eventually be applied to demonology *tout court.* In the face of such ambiguity, the history of'superstition'—even as a concept employed by contemporaries of the witch trials—has to be reported with considerable care.

The second noteworthy aspect of this history is the quite extraordinary extension of demonism—and thus of witchcraft *strictu sensu*—represented by notions like the implicit pact. In 1529 Castañega was remarking almost casually that superstitious people, who turned for aid to something or someone outside Christ, were 'commonly called witches *(hechiceros)*.[62] By the end of the sixteenth century vast areas of lay culture were, in principle at least, susceptible to the charge. Given this, one is almost surprised by how' little witch-hunting there was in reformation Europe, not how much. Jean Delumeau has rightly argued that Protestant attitudes to superstition are unintelligible if separated from the demonology that went with them.[63] In addition to the examples he gives from the major Protestant theologians, his point is amply illustrated from the German lands by the writings of Lutheran pastors like Conrad Platz, Christoph Vischer, and Abraham Scultetus. According to Hermann Samson superstition was the main early indication that God was being abandoned and the devil taken up instead; it was 'the first stage *(der erste grad)'* to magic. In England, Gaule explained that the 'inchoation' or disposition to witchcraft lay in superstition:

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[61] [Johannes Herolt], *Sennones venerabilis ac devotireligiosi magistral Johannis Herolt ordinis F. Predicatorus* (Lyons, 1514), sermon XLI (sin no. 19 against the first Commandment); Samuel de Cassini [Cassinensis], *Questione de le Strie / Quest iones lamearum* (n.p. [Pavia?], 1505), *passim;* Angclus de Clavasio [Carletus], *Summa Angelica de casibus conscientiae* (Strasburg, 1513), fo. cclxxxiiii' (many earlier edns.); Arles y Androsilla, *Tractatus de superstitionibus,* fos. 8'-9'. On Herolt, see Ginzburg, *Ecstasies,* 101-2. Other examples in Gielis, 'Nethcrlandic Theologians' Views of Witchcraft*, 49.

[62] Castafiega, *Tratado,* 304, and for his examples, 310-11.

[61] Jean Delumeau, 'Les Reformateurs et la superstition', in *Ades du colloque lAmiralde Coligny et son temps* (Paris, 1974), 451-87.

> The Fathers, and Schoolmen therefore are not much amisse in defining witch-craft by superstition: Making this to be the Genus, and gathering the other in all the species under it, so that no kind of Witch-craft may be named, which is not found upon superstition, and works not by it. Because in this main act, superstition and Witch-craft both agree; to apply the Creature as means unto those ends and uses; unto which it is neither apt by its own nature, nor thereunto ordained by divine Institution.

The two sins differed only in degree, therefore. Superstition was witchcraft begun, said Gaule, and witchcraft was superstition finished.[64]

But all this is equally true of Catholic religious culture as well. The devil is so important in works like Pedro Ciruclo's *Reprobation de las stiperstitionesy hechicerias* or Jodochus Lorichius's *slberglaub* that it is impossible not to read them as intellectually continuous with the texts that defended witchcraft prosecutions. Yet Ciruelo was, once again, chiefly concerned with practices popularly thought to be beneficial to material life, and Lorichius's divisions of superstition were all popular techniques for securing good fortune. At ground level, the same preoccupations governed the programmes of reforming bishops like Fredcrico Borromeo of Milan, for whom the 'diabolic superstition' in popular witchcraft practices was 'the main object of attack'.[65] It becomes important, then, to look carefully at clerical attitudes to the exact sinfulness of superstition and its ecclesiastical punishment. These are matters for the next two chapters.

[w] Gaule, *Cases of conscience,* 39-40, cf. 16.

[65] A. D. Wright, 'The People of Catholic Europe and the People of Anglican England', *Historical J.* 18 (1975), 463-6, who also comments on Borromeo's demonological writings. For the relationship between 'superstition' and 'witchcraft' in the official pronouncements of the Catholic Church in the Netherlands, sec Alane-Sylvic Dupont-Bouchat, 'La Repression des croyances et des comportcments populaires dans les Pays-Bas: L'Eglise face aux superstitions (xvt'-xvnr), in cad. (ed.), *La Sorcellerie,* 117—43.

33

Reformation

> Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
>
> (Exodus 20:3)

> Unto the advancing of the worship of the true God, the extirpation of Witches and Witch-craft (because it is the most abominable kinde of Idolatry) is a speciall service, and acceptable duty unto God, expressly commanded by himself.
>
> (John Cotta, *Triall of witch-craft)*

To call the arguments surveyed in the last three chapters 'demonological' does not seem strange, wherever they were located. As I said at the outset of this section, however, to label their exponents 'demonologists' is misleading—precisely because of the locations. It implies an exclusive, or at least preponderant, interest in magic and witchcraft, or the exploration by specialists of a particular branch of knowledge. Yet most of the authors were primarily theologians and clergymen who viewed these matters from a much broader intellectual and moral perspective and in the context of much more ambitious programmes. This was necessarily true of those writing systematic studies of beliefs and creeds, compiling guides to the conscience for penitents, confessors, and inquisitors, or devising and explicating catechisms. These were standardized expressions of orthodox religion that were bound, sooner or later, to consider the sins and errors that threatened its purity—among them, the lack of faith and the belief in 'magical' or 'superstitious' efficacies that supposedly influenced many laypeople's behaviour. The fact that there is quite so much demonology stored up in this general religious literature says much about the way witchcraft beliefs fitted seamlessly into the thought-patterns of the authors. It does not, however, turn them into 'demonologists'.

This applies just as much to those who published sermons or tracts devoted specifically to the subject. In most cases, these items too were only contributions to an altogether more sweeping evangelical campaign. Once more, then, we need to look beyond the immediate vicinity of arguments about witchcraft to a broader area of thought. Potentially, it is an enormous one—nothing less than the history of magisterial conceptions of religious reform during two centuries. The aim, however, is only to place demonology among the general theological and evangelical notions that sustained it and to show how prevalent these were. And, in a sense, this is a task already achieved for us in reformation discourse itself in those very areas of writing on which hopes for religious reform ultimately rested—dogmatics, casuistry, and catechesis. These synoptic presentations of the religious world—precise, inclusive maps of its terrain—give us the exact location of clerical demonology. By definition, they inserted it at exactly the point where it belonged and could be understood, even (it was said in some versions) by the simplest minds. At the same time, these were texts whose contents it was hoped to disseminate on a truly gigantic scale, directly or indirectly influencing every phase and level of the reforming process. Nothing in earlier centuries, it has been said, 'matched the Protestant and Catholic Reformations' systematic programfmejs of catechization', while of confessors' manuals Francisco Bethcncourt has remarked that they were 'one of the types of religious literature with greatest impact on the population in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries'.* Together with all the other manifestations of church-type evangelism—confessions of faith, visitation articles, church and school ordinances, codes for regulating orders and missions, and the like—the publications we are about to survey were the means for making religious change a spiritual and moral reality for laypeople as well as a dream of scholars and priests. To appeal to them is, thus, to pinpoint both the theological co-ordinates of magic and witchcraft and, simultaneously, the relevance of these sins to the day-to-day practice of reformation. At what point in the landscape of beliefand behaviour were they placed, then?

* * *

It does not take long to discover the answer. One of Luther's many early attempts to outline the basic religious instruction that eventually found its way into his two catechisms (on which he lavished considerable care) was a short guide to the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. Opening his account of how the first Commandment was broken is this list:

> By taking to witchcraft, magic, or the black arts, when in difficulty.
> By making use of mystic letters, signs, herbs, magic words, charms, and the like.
> By using divining rods, incantations, crystal-gazing, cloak-riding, or milk-stealing.
> By ordering one's life and work in accordance with lucky days, astrological signs, and the views of fortune-tellers.
> By using prayers and adjurations to the evil spirits to protect oneself, one's cattle, house, children, and all else, from wolves, war, fire, flood, and other kinds of harm.
> By attributing misfortune and difficulties to the devil, or to the wickedness of men; and by not accepting hardships with love and gratitude, whether pleasant or unpleasant, as from God alone; and by not acknowledging them to Him with thanks and ready submissiveness.[1] [2]

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[1] Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning,* 157; Francisco Bethencourt, 'Portugal: A Scrupulous Inquisition', in Ankarloo and Henningsen (eds.), *Early Modem European Witchcraft,* 404. The importance of looking at this type of literature for Portuguese demonology is also stressed in the new research by Jose Pedro de Matos Paiva. Cf. Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in Enttlish Societv 1559-1625*(Oxford, 1982), 232 (on catechisms): 'No student of the religious mentality of the age or of the dissemination of protestantism, can afford to neglect these often skilfully composed summaries of Christian doctrine?

[2] Martin Luther, 'A Short Exposition of the Decalogue, the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer' (1520), in *Reformation Writings of Martin Luther,* cd. and trans. Bertram Lee Woolf (2 vols • London 1952), i. 75. There is also a similar Latin text from the same period: *Instruclio pro confession peccatorum abrevtanda secundum Dccalogum.* For funher details and commentary on these texts see Haustrin ..., *Martin Luthers Stellung,* 98-100, and see also 32-67, 105-6; one of Haustein's major arguments is that the Decalogue was at the heart of Luther's witchcraft beliefs, giving him a greater concern for the spiritual aspects of superstition, magic, and *malefictum* than for the concrete diabolism of transvection, demonic sexuality

This is virtually a complete summary of the themes of clerical demonology. Luther had already spoken at considerably greater length about these sins in his Decalogue sermons of 1516-17, where they were also classed as infractions of the first Commandment. In sermons on the catechism during 1528 he again emphasized that all magicians acted contrary to this law by substituting fear of the devil for fear of God.[3] When the Large Catechism appeared in 1529 the statement above was reduced to the demonism inherent in archetypal reactions to misfortune: 'Those also belong here who... make a pact with the devil that he might give them enough money, help them in love-affairs, protect their cattle, and recover lost goods.'[4] Luther presumably assumed that when pastors (together with fathers and schoolmasters) gave guidance on the first Commandment in teaching the catechism they would elaborate this more succinct formulation in the fuller terms he had given earlier.

He was not disappointed. With its simple routines of repetition and memorization, catechizing became the single most important method of authorizing and conditioning Lutheran belief and behaviour.[5] It was intended to be habit-forming—for adults as well as children, women as well as men, pastors as well as laity. Luther's own two texts and his expositions of them were adopted as official versions, or they acted as models for other catechism drafters, throughout Protestant Europe. In Germany itself, according to Gerald Strauss, a 'prodigious' number of catechisms was in circulation, in print or in manuscript, by 1600. They were the vehicles of what he has called an 'experiment in mass pedagogy'.[6] The majority of school ordinances issued by the Lutheran states, for example, employed only the catechism for the purposes of religious instruction. It was the most efficient and least ambiguous (and thus safest) way of instilling the essentials of what pupils were required to know.[7] In literally hundreds of thousands of attempts at basic pedagogic theology, therefore, those who believed in or used magic and witchcraft must have been blamed for violating God's sternest law.

We can glimpse this from several directions. In the Northausen preacher Johann Spangenberg's reworking of Luther's Large Catechism the child was to be asked during instruction on the first Commandment who was the god of the magic-user and treasure-seeker. The answer was, of course, the devil, 'with whom they bind themselves, that he gives them enough money, preserves their cattle, and finds lost goods again'.[8] Similar examples from the independent catechisms of other Lutherans

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and the sabbat. An earlier studyis Johann Diefenbach.DrrZauirrg/auirdfw-S'erAzeAntrnJaArAiin^rrtrnarA *den Katechirmen Dr Martin Luthenund det P. Canitiuslffamz,* 1900), 1-36.

[1] Haustein, *Marlin Luthen Stellung,* 101.   [4] Cited ibid. 102.   rrmmrin

' Strauss, *Luther', Houte of Learning,* 151-75. There are surveys of Lutheran catechtsms n Gr^ono Langemack, k/or; *Catecheticae. oder Getammleter Nachrichten zu einer Catechetitchen Hittone* (Stral-**d. 1729), . 2, 263–93, 456–528.**

"ln* ' Gerald^ trauss, 'The Reformation and its Public in an Age of Orthodoxy', in Po-Chia Hsia (ed.), ***n Peo le*, 1**

&TMRid»fd G."'.hmp Gerald Strauss, •Pmusran&m »d Literacy in Early Modem G.muny', ***Past and Present*, 104 (1984), 35–9.**

• **Johann Spangenberg, *Der gross Catechismus und Kinder Leere D. M. Luth. für die jungen Christen, in*** *fragitucke vcrfassel* (Wittenberg, 1543), sig. Ci^r^.

were the warnings against resorting to the ‘black arts’ when in misfortune in the version for the dukedom of Brunswick-Luneburg by Rhegius Urbanus of Augsburg and in the version published at Frankfurt in 1551 by Jodocus Willichius.[9] Rhineland-Westphalian fathers were expected, both by Caspar Olevianus in his ‘peasant’ (or country) catechism and in the Dusseldorf school catechism by Joannes Monheim, to explain to children that it was contrary to the first Commandment to run after magicians and fortune-tellers.[10] Important Lutheran theologians like Johann Brenz wrote studies of the catechism in which the first Commandment covered the sins of ‘magicians, witches, soothsayers, and others of this sort who believe that their incantations are the cause of good fortune.’[11] In 1525 Johannes Biigenhagen, later *Obersttperintendent* for the north German churches and Luther’s emissary to Denmark, preached against superstitious healing in a catechism sermon; ‘you put your trust in something other than God,’ he said, summing up breakers of the first Commandment; ‘you use magic and are idolatrous.’[12] An especially fulsome treatment was given by Hypcrius, the eminent Marburg theologian, in his guide to the questions concerning the Decalogue that Lutheran men and women were to ask themselves in private examination of their consciences. Dominating the external sins against the first Commandment is a query about ‘procuring of anie thing eyther good or badde [by] unlawfull meanes, or superstitious and damnable helpes’.

> Of which sort be the observation and choyse of days, of planetarie houres, of motions and courses of starres, mumbling of prophane prayers, consisting of wordes both straunge and sencelesse; adiurations, sacrifices, consecrations and hallowings of diverse things, rytes and ceremonies unknowen to the Church of God, sundrie characters and figures, demaunding of questions and answeres of the dead, dealing with damned spirites, or with any instrumentes of phanatical divination as basons, ringes, cristalles, glasses, roddes, prickes, numbers, dreames, lottos, fortunetellinges, oracles, soothsayinges, horoscoping or marking the houres of nativities, witchcraftes, enchauntmentes, and all such superstitious trumperie. And hereunto is to bee referred the paul tring mawmetrie and heathenish worshipping of that domestical God or familiar Angel which was thought to bee appropried to everie particular person: the enclosing or binding of spirites to certaine instrumentes and such like devises of Sathan the Devill.[13]

Elsewhere in Protestant Europe the pattern was the same.[14] In Lutheran Denmark, Bishop Brochmand dealt with the basic casuistry of magic and witchcraft in the section of his dogmatic theology devoted to the first Table of laws.[15] Heinrich Bullinger spoke of ‘leagues and covenants made with the devil by witchcraft *(per magicarnS* as the things most condemned by the first Commandment.[16] For Calvinists the Genevan catechism itself did not refer to magic or witchcraft in its Decalogue teaching, but Calvin nevertheless ‘harmonized’ all the crucial Old Testament prohibitions with Exodus 20 by adding commentaries on them to his analysis of the first Commandment.[17] In the Heidelberg catechism of 1563 Calvinists were taught that the first Commandment required them to ‘avoid and flee all idolatry, sorcery, [and] enchantments’. This was an immensely influential text, not only in the Palatinate, where it was commissioned by the Elector, but in Germany, England, Scotland, and the United Provinces.[18] As with Luther’s catechisms, we also know the thinking that lay behind it, since one of its (probable) drafters, Zacharias Ursinus, published lectures on its provisions. The first Commandment extended to ‘Magike, Sorcerie, and Witchcraft,’ he elaborated, since these all involved ‘a league, or covenant with the divel the enemy of god, with certain words or ceremonies adjoined, that the doing and saying this or that, shal receive things promised, of the devil, and such things which are to be asked and received of god alone’. The latter included life’s commodities, the former the gratification of lust and self-display. The words and ceremonies, indeed all ‘enchantments’, presupposed the covenant since they had no intrinsic force. So too did all superstition, a vice that embraced ‘South-saying, observations of dreames, divinations, signes, and predictions, as foretellinges of Wyzards, al which are by expresse words condemned in the Scriptures’.[19] The Heidelberg catechism became the official one in the Dutch Republic, where the synod of Dordrecht made catechizing a national policy. Between 1588 and 1730 roughly 120 ‘explanations’ of the text were published, to be read by churchgoers each Sunday. On the thirty-fourth Sunday of the year the ‘explanation’ spoke of witchcraft and fortune-telling as sins against the first Commandment.[20]

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[9] Rhegius Urbanus, *Caiechtsmus Deutsch* (Frankfurt/Main, 1545), sig. Biii«; Willichius *Totius catecheseos chrislianae expositio,* 141; cf. the catechism of David Chytraeus, in Reufed 1 *Ouellen* v’ii 177

[10] For both these texts, see Reu(ed.),fiUe//en,ix. 1314,1429.

[11] Johann Brenz, *Catechismus pia et utili explication illustratus,* ed. Caspar Graeterfnp 1551) 436 According to J. M. *Estes, Christian Magistrate and State Church: The Reforming Career of Johannes Brenz* (London, 1982), preface, Brenz s catechism was second only to Luther’s in popularity and influence

[12] JohannBugenhagen.^2^^ **ens Katechismus predigten, gehalten 1525 und 1532, ed. Georg** Buchwald (Leipzig, 1909), 33—1; E. Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford 199D 26R 274

[13] Andreas Gerhard [Hyperius], *The true tryall and examination of a mans owne selfe,* tnms Thomas Newton (London, 1586), 34-5.

[14] For the European popularity of Luther’s catechism literature, see Bernd Moeller ‘Luther in Europe: His Works in Translation 1517-46’, in Kouri and Scott (eds.), *Politics and Society,* 237.

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In later medieval England there had been some attempts at categorizing magic and witchcraft as sins against the first Commandment, and even at categorizing this Commandment as especially concerned with these sins. God forbade many things by his first precept, wrote the author of the early fifteenth-century dialogue *Dives and Pauper,* but ‘in special mammetrye, ydolatrye, wychecraft and sorcerye’.[21] *Dives and Pauper* is in fact an excellent pre-Reformation example of the textual combinations we are considering. It is an instructional treatise, dominated by the Decalogue, in which half the analysis of the first Commandment is given over to demonology—in this case, a substantial treatment involving an attack on astrology, a division of divination into allowed and forbidden types, an account of the limits of demonic knowledge and efficacy, and a denunciation of witches. The text lists the canon laws against witchcraft, including the *Canon episcopi,* which it takes to mean that night-flying is merely a drcam. Belief in metamorphosis is also said to be worse than pagan. The dialogue deals mainly, however, with the kind of witchcraft defined in terms that were later used by clerics everywhere: ‘Every craft that man or woman usyth to knowyn ony thyng or to don ony thyng that he may nought knowyn ne don be weye of reson nc be werkynge of kende it is wychecraft.’[22] According to another canon this included clients as well as specialists, and a long list of popular practices involving new moon and new year observances, judicial astrology, divination by augury, numbers, and dreams, charming when gathering herbs, and wearing scrolls and amulets with ‘ony scripture or figurys and carectys’ on them (except for devotion).[23] Such things offended against the first Commandment ‘wol grevously’ by treating objects with the faith and worship due to God and expecting from them efficacies that only the ‘fend’ could provide.[24]

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[15] Brochmand, *Syslema universae theologiae,* pt. 2,68-9.

[16] Heinrich Bullinger, *The Decades of Henry Bullinger,* trans. H.I., ed. Thomas Harding (4 vols.; Cambridge, 1849-52), i. 222 (Latin original, *Sermonum decades quinque, de pottssimts chrtslianae rehgionis capitibus* (London, 1587), 105, first pub. 1557).

[17] Calvin, Commentariw, i. 417-53, esp. 426-32; ii. 90-1; and see above, Ch. 31.

[18] Thomas F. Torrance (ed.), *The School of Faith: The Catechisms of the Reformed Church* (London, 1959), 89.

[19] Ursinus, *Summe of Christian religion,* 818-19; cf. Jeremias Bastinpus /In *exposition or commentarie upon the catechisme of Christian religion, which is taught in the Ms «nd churches both of the Lowe Countryes, and of the dominions of the Countie Palatine* (Cambridge, 1589) fos. IZU-Zr.

[20] Gijswijt-Hofstra, ‘Witchcraft’, 82; examples in G. J. Stronks, ‘Onderwijs van de gereformeerde kerk over toverij en waarzeggerij, ca. 1580–1800’, in M. Gijswijt-Hofstra and W. Frijhoff (eds.), *Nederland betoverd: Toverij en Hekserij van de veertiende tot in de twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1987), 196–206 (English summary kindly provided by Angela van der Ma e).

These notions were sufficiently important on the eve of the English Reformation to dominate the exposition of the first Commandment in a popular guide to devotion by Richard Whitford, who warned householders against ‘supsticious wytchcraftes and charmes that ben moche used’ and spoke of wise men and women as ‘the devylles prociours’.[2’] But they were also given prominence in the new primers, since the first transgressions against the first Commandment to be listed here were taken directly from Luther’s *Short exposition.*[u] The views of the early English reformers were naturally in line with their Continental colleagues. John Hooper, who published a study of the Decalogue during his period in Zürich, wrote of the idolatry of those who practised astrology, superstitious healing, and divination, and of‘souch as geve faythe unto the conjuration or sorsery of superstitious persones ... to wycches or southsaiers wher they abuse the name of God’.[27] A catechism addressed to his own chil-

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[11] *Dives and Pauper (yo\.* 1, pt. 1), cd. P.H. Barnum, Early English Text Society, 275 (London, 1976), 166.

[22] Ibid. 167, and sec 167—9. [2J] Ibid. 157—9.

[24] Ibid. 164-5. For other 14th- and 15th-c. English
Commandment, see John Mirk, *The*
Aston,
is

dren by Thomas Becon forbade ‘the art of magic, witchcraft, sorcery, charms, incantations, conjurations, etc.’ under the first Commandment.[28] In his catechism Cranmer spoke simply of fears of astrological and other forms of unpropitiousness.[29]

The Marian bishops turned just as naturally back to Catholic tradition, but it made no difference to what they said on this issue. Edmund Bonner’s treatment of the first Commandment, for example, lists eight sins against it, but gives most space to those ‘that do use witchcrafte, Necromancie, enchauntement, or any other such like ungodly, and superstitious trade, or have any confydence in such thynges, or do seke helpe of, or by any of them’. This was to make ‘secrete pactes and covenauntes with the devil’, there being no greater possible offence against God. Moreover, for Bonner, ‘not onelye all suche as use charmes, withcraftes [sic], and conjurations, trangresse [sic] thys cheife and hyghe commaundemente, but also those that seke and resorte unto them, for anye counsayle or remedy.’[30] These were evidently the doctrines later taught to the children of English Catholic exiles abroad, as for example in Laurence Vaux’s school at Louvain. In his much reprinted catechism the first Commandment was said to prohibit ‘all idolatrie and worshipping of false Goddes, art magike, divination, superstitions, observations, and all wicked worshipping’. The magical ‘art’, in particular, covered those who ‘of purpose tel destinies by taking of lottes, or verses in the scriptures, Enchanters, witches, sorcerers, interpreters of dreames, and suche like prohibited by the lawe of God: and all they that advisedly use their help to recover health, or to get a thing that is lost’.[31]

It has been suggested that, as the English Reformation became established, superstition and witchcraft lost ground as the attention-grabbing aspects of idolatry, which came to be seen more and more as a problem to do with images in particular. The traditional church had worried more about unbelief than misbelief, and in any case Calvinists, unlike Catholics and Lutherans, subdivided the first Table of the Decalogue into four Commandments not three, giving the making and worshipping of graven images a separate and consequently elevated status; thus, from the 1530s on, witchcraft, ‘not having a commandment to itself like idolatry, came to feature less prominently in catechetical instruction’.[32] It is certainly true that not all English catechisms mentioned witchcraft and that many referred to it in connection with the third, rather than (or as well as) the first Commandment.[33] Yet in those texts that found space for any amplification—and many, by their very nature, did not—it remained a sin linked sufficiently to the first Commandment for us to identify this as its principal Reformation home. It has also to be borne in mind that in England and Wales, as elsewhere in Europe, clergymen were expected to amplify the teachings of the catechism even if the text itself did not.

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[28] Thomas Becon, *The Catechism of Thomas Becon, with other pieces,* ed. J. Ayre (Cambridge, 1844), 59.

[29] Cranmer, *Cathechismus.* fo. xiiii^r. For the early history of the Protestant catechism in England, with many examples, see Philippa Tudor, ‘Religious Instruction for Children and Adolescents in the Early English Reformation’, *J. Ecclesiastical Hist.* 35 (1984), 391-413; cf. Collinson, *Religion of Protestants.* 2314.

[30] Bonner, *Profitable and necessarye doctrine,* sig. Hhii'"*.

[31] Laurence Vaux, *A catechisme or Christian doctrine necessarie for children and ignorante people* (Louvain, 1583), sigs. Cii^r, Ciiii*, see also the appended ‘A brief fourme of confession’, sig. Cvii* (first edn. 1567; 9 edns. to 1620).

[32] Aston, *England’s Iconoclasts.* 410-13 (quotation from n. 95), see also 371-91 Aston restricts ‘idolatry’ properly so-called to the question of images, but concedes that the sins of witchcraft and idolatry were related and that witches attracted hostility because they were ‘prime offenders as idolaters’.

[33] e.g. John Stockdale, *A short catechisme for housholders* (London, 1583), sig. B vii^r; John More (revised

The short catechism in the official Prayer Book of the Elizabethan and Stuart Church finds space only for the briefest account of the Decalogue. But Alexander Nowell, dean of St Paul's, wrote officially approved catechisms that went through at least fifty-six editions between 1570 and 1645; and in his middle-sized version, pupils were expected to know that sinners against the first Commandment included ‘All Idolaters ... all Soothsayers, conjurers, sorcerers, witches, Charmers, and all that seeke unto them’?[34] Among the other Elizabethan catechists who taught the same were George Gifford and the author *of A briefe catechisme* (1601).[35] The prolific early seventeenth-century catechist John Ball reiterated that ‘seeking to wizards for helpe’ was forbidden by the first Commandment, and so too did the author of *The summe of sacred divinitie,* published by the ‘puritan’ divine, John Downame.[36] Another Stuart authority, John Mayer, glossed the Prayer Book catechism by saying that, among the sinners against this Commandment, the worst kind of idolaters were ‘witches and Wizards, and all such as seeke unto them in their sicknesse, or losses’. These had ‘palpably changed their God, and therefore the true God hath commanded, that they should not bee suffered to live.... the least offenders this way doe in effect, say to the blacke fiend of hell, come and help us.’[37] According to Edward Elton’s exposition of the Decalogue, both those who were ‘Magicians or witches themselves’ and those who sought help from them were equally guilty under the same precept.[38] The same view must have been held by the leading English casuist of this period, William Ames, who classified cases involving magic and superstition under a first Table rubric.[39]

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by E[d ward] D[ering]), *A bryefe and necessary catechisme or instruction* (London, 1577), sig. Av'; Edmund Bunny, *The whole summe ofchristian religion (London,* 1576), fo. 39'; Christopher] S[hutte], *Th'e testimonie of atruefayth: conteyned in a shorte catechisme* (London, 1581), sig. Avi'; Richard Bernard, *A two-fold catechisme* (London, 1629), sig. E8'; Stephen Denison, *A compendious catechisme,* 7th edn. (London, 1632), 31. For witchcraft and the second Commandment, sec Henry Wilkinson, *A catechisme,* 2nd edn. (London, 1624), sig. A5’; Bourne, *Light from Christ,* 513.

[34] Alexander Nowell, *A catechisme* (London, 1609), sig. A5-(first pub. 1572); Ian Green, ‘ “For Children in Yeeres and Children in Understanding”: The Emergence of the English Catechism under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts,’ *J. Ecclestasttcal Hist.* 37 (1986), 399, from whom I have gained many bibliographical references.

[35] G(eorge) GpflordJ, *A cathechisme conteining the summe of Christian religion* (London
R.B., *A briefe catechisme (Lwiton,* 1601), sig. C7’.Cf. Fenner *Abriefe*
the lave (Middleburg, 1588[?]), sig. B4r; Beard,

[36] [John Ball], *A short treatise:* *ill*
don, 1631), 182; Anon., *The summe of*
(attributed to Sir Henry Finch by Green,[1]

[37] ***The***

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During the middle and later decades of the seventeenth century, however, the connection seems to have been less often made. Neither of the Westminster Assembly's catechisms paid attention to it, though one of the Church of Scotland's most active representatives at its meetings, Samuel Rutherford, mentioned having 'recourse to Sathan or watches in our trouble' in his own unpublished version.” Many Restoration catechisms highlighted atheism as the most important first Commandment sin. Even so, in 1674 the vicar of Tilehurst, Simon Lowth, was requiring catechumens to respond to a question about what this Commandment forbade with this answer: 'Atheism, Polytheism, Idolatry, Superstitious observation, and the use of Art-magick and Divination.'[40] [41] In the same decade, Welsh recusants were advised (in Welsh) to question their consciences before confessing, in case they had broken the first Commandment by 'going to enchantresses, witches, or magicians to get advice, or causing or instructing others to go: or practising [themselves] any witchcraft or superstition'.[42]

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The devotional literature of Continental Catholicism was equally insistent in its identification of magic, witchcraft, and allied practices as sins against God's first law. Of the casuists, some arranged their cases of conscience alphabetically, notably the three highly popular Italians, the Franciscan Angelo Carletti and the Dominicans Joannes Cagnazzo (of Taggia), and Silvestro Da Prierio.[43] Others were commentating on Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* and therefore dealt with religion's opposites under the heading of *iustitia,* of which the debt to God satisfied by religion was the principal expression. Nevertheless, this could still be done within the context of the Decalogue, since 'religion' was the virtue by which one rendered to God the service and honour that was due to him as part of the first Commandment.[44] * * * * The majority, especially from the middle of the sixteenth century onwards, were straightforward decalogists. The trend was under way in the later medieval period in Decalogue sermons and with writers of catechisms and treatises *de decem praeceptis.* At this point, treatments of the sins against the first Commandment were also already dominated by discussions of 'superstition'—fifteen sins out of twenty-four, in the case of Johannes Herolt's *Sermones discipuli*.[45] Better known among historians of witchcraft for his *Fonnicarius,* Johannes Nider included a substantial amount of demonology in the commentary on the first Commandment in his *Praeceptorium legis srve expositio decalogi,* blending topics like metamorphosis, transvcction, demonic trickery, and *maleficium* with a lengthy amplification of the Thomistic taxonomy of superstitions.[46] There are detailed sermon-length treatments of superstition and its various Thomistic subdivisions (including dealing with devils) in Herpius s treatment of the Decalogue.[47] Another example is Johannes Bcetz, the Carmelite friar and professor of theology at Louvain, who preached ten sermons on the Ten Commandments in Brussels in the 1460s, and dealt with superstition and demonism in depth in his ‘exhaustive explication’ of the first.[48] In France, as the fifteenth century closed, both ‘black’ and ‘white’ witchcrafts (included in which were charming, divination, augury, and New Year gifts) were listed among the things forbidden by the first law in *La Jleiir des commandements de Dieu** In Germany, as the next century opened, the most popular of the late-medieval lay catechisms, Dietrich of Munster’s ‘mirror’ for Christian men, offered first Commandment prayers against the sins involved in ‘fortune-telling, blessing, sorcery *(tzoverie),* soothsaying *(wychelye),* and necromancy’, and in augury, astrology, and other ‘superstitions’.[50] On the eve of Luther’s protest against indulgences, Catholic Decalogue teaching in Germany was driving home the same message, while in Spain Ciruelo’s *Reprobation de lassupersticionesy hechicerias,* a sequel to his Decalogue-based *Arte de bien confessar* (1501), was effectively (as he explained in a preface) an extended commentary on the sins against ‘the first and principal commandment’.[51]

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[40] Samuel Rutherford, *Ane catachisme conteining the soume of Christian religion,* in Alexander F. Mitchell (ed.), *Catechisms of the Second Reformation* (London, 1886), 228. The larger Westminster catechism of 1648 forbade 'all compacts and consulting with the devil, and hearkening to his suggestions', and mentioned 'charms' under the third Commandment: Torrance, *School of Fatih,* 208,211.

[41] Simon Lowth, *Catechetical questions* (London, 1674), 78.

[42] John Hughes [pseud. 'Hugh *Owen'], Allvedd neu Agoriad Paradwys t rCymry (The key or opening of paradise for the Welsh people)* (Liege, 1670), 85 (trans, kindly provided by Prys Morgan).

[42] For the relevant sections, see Clavasio, *Summa Angelica* fos. Ixvn ^clovn ' Joannes Cagnazzo, *Summa summarum [de casibus conscientiaj quae Tabiena dtettur* (Bologna, 1517), fo. 458 J Sup^uoJ, Silvestro Da Prierio [Mazzolini], *Summae Sylvestnnae quae summa* *summarum* (Antwerp, 1581), pt. 2 (separate pagination), 139-42 373-6 (many earlier edns.). Other examples: Manuel Rodriguez, *Summa casuum conscientiae,* trans. Ba tazansde Camzal (Douai, 1614), 9–11,

[44] See, for example, Binsfeld, *Théologie des pasteurs*, 312–14; Tamburini, *Explicatio decalogi*, 80.

[45] [Herolt], *Sermones*, sermon 41 (many earlier edns.). For this point and many other examples down to Luther, see Johannes Geffcken, *Der Bildercatechismus des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts und die catechetischen*

Still, it was the publication of Martin de Azpilcueta’s manual for confessors and penitents, first in Portuguese in 1549, then in Spanish in 1556, and eventually in fifty

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Hauptstiicke in dieser Zeit bis auf Luther (Leipzig, 1855), 53-6. For bibliographical details of the relevant literature, see Harmening, *Superslilio.* 272 n. 55, who also surveys demonological attacks on superstition and idolatry’at 292-317.

[u] Nider, *Praeceptorium legis.* sigs. c2’-d4r (written r.1440). Summary in Lea, *Materials,* i. 265-72, who, despite Nidcr’s many discussions of what, in his own eyes, amounted to witchcraft, nevertheless puzzles over the lack of any explicit use of the term (p. 272).

[47] Henricus Herpius, *Incipit speculum aureum decern preceptorum* ***Dei***(Basel, 1496), sigs. aviiir—bv’ (earlier edns.)

[41] Johannes Bectz, *Commentum super decern praeceptis decalogi* (Louvain, 1486), sigs. c6r-d6r; Gielis, ‘Netherlands Theologians’ Views of Witchcraft’, 44-6.

[49] *Thejloure of the commaundementes ofgod.* trans. Andrew Chertsey, 3rd cdn. (London, 1521), fos. xv'-xv? (first pub. Rouen, 1496). z

[50] Dietrich of Munster [Coeldc], *Einfruchtbarlich Spiegel. oJfHandtbuchelgen alter Christen mynschen. gemacht, undzusamen vergadert* (Cologne, n.d. [1529]), sig. Biiiir (many earlier and later edns.); on the popularity of this text sec Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform, 1250-1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of%[‘M‘d^* ***and Reformation*** *Euro P'* (London, 1980), 219; id. *The Reformation in the Cities* (London, **19.., 28–3.**

[51] Anon, *Die zehe gebot in disem buch erclert und ussgelegt durch etliche hochberumte lerer* (n.p. [Strasbur.] n.d. [1516]), s’^s' Bi'-Biv* (with illustrations by Hans Baldung Grien); Anon, *Beycht Spigelder sunder* (Nuremberg, 1509), sigs. Diiir-Diiiir. For other similar texts, see Haustein, *Martin Luthers Stel***lung,** 36-7, and for both texts and their investigation, Dieter Harmening, ‘Spatmittelalterliche Aberglaubenskntik in Dekalog- und Beichtliteratur’, in Peter Dinzelbacher and Dieter R. Bauer (eds.), *Volksreligton tm hohen und spdten Mittelalter* (Paderborn, 1990), 243-51. Ciruelo, *Treatise,* 57-8, says that this work greatly expands his earlier treatment of idolatry.

Latin versions, that marked the full establishment of the 'decalogical' reading of witchcraft among casuists. Known as 'Navarrus', Azpilcueta was professor of canon law at Coimbra and Salamanca and then 'consultor' of the Sacred Penitentiary in Rome, where he gave advice on difficult cases referred to the Papacy. Following Aquinas closely on every aspect of superstition, he nevertheless made it a transgression directly against God's own laws rather than against religion more broadly conceived. Not all the Jesuits adopted this practice, but their most influential casuists did. They included Juan Azor, who held chairs of moral theology at Alcala and at the Jesuit College in Rome (and whose 'brief treatment' of cases of conscience extends to 3,800 folio columns), Cardinal Francisco de Toledo, whose *Summa casuum conscientiae* went through many editions and translations, and Hermann Busenbaum, whose *Medulla theologiae moralis* enjoyed no fewer than 200 printings by 1776.[52] Other Catholic casuists and writers on moral theology who followed suit were Joannes Molanus, theology professor at Louvain,[53] Cosimo Filiarcho, canon of Pistoia,[54] the Spanish Jesuit Thomas Sanchez and both his compatriot Estevan de Salazar and his fellow Jesuits Valerius Rcginaldus and Cristoval de Vega,[55] the Dominicans Ludovicus López and Michele Zanardi,[56] the Franciscan Benito Rcmigio Noydens,[57] and the Portuguese theologian and preacher Antonio Fernandes de Moura.[58]

The best example from early modern France is the Franciscan Jean Bcnedicti's highly popular confessors' manual, the *Somme des pechez,* which appeared first in 1584, enjoyed many later reprintings, and was in widespread use.[59] Bcnedicti's substantial demonology is collected under the headings of sins against the three fundamental virtues enjoined by the first Commandment. Those who read books of magic and necromancy, practised astrology, divination, and the interpretation of dreams, paid attention to *(levins* and other magicians, tried to drive away demons with music and herbs, and believed in the reality of metamorphosis had all abandoned their faith, and were no better than atheists, Manichaeans, and other heretics. Those faced with adversity who despaired, thinking God had abandoned them, had just as clearly lost all hope. These included (again) the sick who sought help from magicians, those who used diviners to find lost things or know the future, those who practised any of the many individual healing and divinatory techniques that Benedicti condemned as superstitions—and even duellists. Charity, finally, was destroyed by the outright devil-worship of witches who went to sabbats ‘where they give upside-down worship to the great devil Satan’, together with the keepers of familiar spirits and those tacit pact-makers, the superstitious. It was a sin, too, to turn away the misfortunate and needy if, in their necessity, they appealed instead to ‘devils, witches, enchanters, diviners, astrologers, necromancers, and other impostors’.[60]

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[52] Edns. consulted: Juan Azor [Azorius], *Institutionum moralium* (3 vols.; Lyons, 1610-16), i. cols. 878-901 (where 'religion' and the sins against it are subsumed under the first Commandment); Toledo, *Instructio sacerdotum,* see above, Ch. 32 n. 14; Busenbaum, *Medulla theologiae moralis,* 92-106. See also Vincentius Filliucius, *Quaestionum moralium de Christianis ojjiciis in casibus conscientiae* (2 vols.; Lyons, 1634,1633), ii. 109-34; Filliucius was another professor at the Roman College and 'rcsponsore quaestionibus conscientiae et poenilcntiario S.D.N. Papac ad S. Petrum*. For portrayals of magic and curiosity as sins against the Decalogue in these and related texts, see M. Vcrbeeck-Verheist, 'Magic ct curiosité au xvu* siècle', *Revue d'histoire ecclesiastique,* 83 (1988), 349-68.

[51] Joannes Molanus, *Theologiaepracticae compendium* (Cologne, 1590), 79-83.

[M] Cosimo Filiarco, *De officio sacerdotis... tomusprimus* (Venice, 1597), 412-38.

[55] Sanchez, *Opus morale in praecepta decalogi,* ii. 303-48; Estevan de Salazar, *Segunda parte de los Discursosy doctrina Christiana, en que se declaran los diez mandamientos de la ley de Dios* (Salamanca, 1597), 35-44; Valerius Rcginaldus, *Compendiaria praxis dificiliorum casuum conscientiae, in administratione sacramentipoenitentiae crebro occurrentium,* 2nd edn. (Cologne, 1622), pt. 2,49-50; Cristoval de Vega, *Cast, et awenimenti rari della confessione,* trans. Giuseppe Alione (Bologna, 1670), 154 (first pub. in Spanish in Valencia, 1656).

[56] López, *Instructorium conscientiae,* i. 113-16; Michele Zanardi, *In summa divinorum praeceptorum deca logi* (Venice, 1619), pl. 1,297-319.

[57] Benito Rcmigio Noydens, *Practica de curas, y confessores, y doctrina para pemtentes* (Lisbon, 1680), 11-29; Kamen, *Phoenix and the Flame,* 284, calls this a 'best-selling manual for priests'-

'* Antonio Fernandes de Moura, L'*Examen de la theologie morale* (Rouen, 1638), 30-1 (first pub. tn **Lati 1625).**

'"'Briggs, *Communiliet of Belief,* 293, describes it as the 'most impressive and encyclopedic' manual for confessors written by a French cleric; see also 277-338, for the general French literature on confessional matters.

The catechism teaching of the Catholic Reformation was naturally based on the official pattern established at the Council of Trent and published in 1566. Pastors were instructed to explain to their pupils that there were four main types of transgressors against the first Commandment—heretics, those who despaired of salvation, those who were happiest with worldly possessions and attributes, and ‘those who give credit to dreams, divination, fortunetelling, and such superstitious illusions’.[61] Like their Protestant counterparts, Catholic parishes, schools, and households throughout Europe could also draw on other catechisms by influential individuals. Just how influential Erasmus remained after the middle of the sixteenth century is doubtful, but even he—so often thought of as sceptical, or at least indifferent towards witchcraft—accepted a version of it as a first Commandment sin. Outright idolaters, he wrote in his catechism, worshipped things like the sun, moon, and stars, or else they preferred the devil to God. But there was an implicit kind as well, to which belonged ‘all curyous artes and craftes, of divynyng and sothesayeng, of juglyng, of doing cures by charmes or witchcraft in whiche althoughe there be none expresse conspiration with dyvelles or wyked spirites, yet nevertheles is ther some secrete dealyng with them, and so therfore a secrete denyeng of god.’[62] Of undeniable popularity after mid-century was the Jesuit Peter Canisius’s catechism, modelled in outline on Luther’s, translated and abridged in many languages, and adopted, for example, by Philip II for the Netherlands Church and by Ferdinand I in the Empire. In this version (in the English translation), the child was to pronounce the meaning of the first Commandment in a sentence: ‘It forbiddeth and disanulleth

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“ Jean Benedicti, *La somme des pechez, el le remede d’iceux* (Paris, 1595), 35-52, quotations at 46 52 (first pub. 1584).

[41] *The Catechism ofthe Council of Trent,* trans. J. Donovan (Dublin, 1829), 353.

[u] Desiderius *ftnsmus, A playne and godly exposition or declaration of the commune crede andofthex commaundementes ofgoddes law,* trans. William Marshall (London, 1534[?J), sig. Tiii'; the Latin oritt was *Dilucida et pia explanatio symbol, quod apostolorum dicitur, decalogi preceptorum, et dominicae firecationis* (Basel and Antwerp, 1533).

Idolatry, or honouring of false Gods, Magique, Divination, superstitious observances, and in breefc, all suchc service of the Goddes, whiche is erronious and nought. And contrariwise, it requireth us to beleeve, to honour, and to pray to one oncly God, who is the best and most mightie of all other.' The only other brief guidance offered concerned the honour and worship of the saints.[63] Cardinal Bellarmine likewise contributed two much translated catechisms to the Catholic repertoire, and in both he reinforced the same orthodoxy by drawing out the implications of the Trent document. In the fuller of his texts, the 'master' was to teach his 'scholar' that idolaters included 'Inchanters and Witches, and al Sorcerers, Ncgromancers, and Soothsayers, who gave to the divel of hell that honour which is due oncly to God; and some of them take him and adore him for their God, and thinke by his meanes to foretell things to come, or to find treasures, or to attain unto other their dishonest desires.' In the condensed version—forced, presumably, to pick out the first Commandment sinners that really mattered—Bellarmine chose just two groups: infidels and witches.[64]

The number of other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century catechisms, catechism studies, and guides to pastors and householders composed for individual Catholic territories (eventually dioceses) or for general use is very considerable. Spain seems to have taken the lead in the early part of the sixteenth century, while the great age of French catechetics arrived after about 1640.[65] Examples of the link between magic and witchcraft and the first Commandment are found in the texts by Georg Witzel, Johann Gropper (Cologne), Friedrich Nausea (Vienna), Michael Helding (Merseburg), Domingo de Valtanas (Seville), Pierre Binsfeld (Trier), Georg Wittweiler (Bavaria), Cardinal Richelieu (Lu?on), and Nicolas Turlot (Namur).[66] In the period when diocesan catechisms proliferated in France, from about 1670, Bossuet's version for the schoolchildren of Meaux speaks typically of the sins against the first Commandment as ‘all idolatry, magic, heresy, and all superstitions’ (the only other issue that is mentioned concerns the honouring of saints and their images and relics). The text concentrates, in fact, on superstitious healing, which the catechumen admits to be demonic, even if the healing words are holy and the intention is good.[67] During the eighteenth century, witches *(sorciers)* were still being spoken of as infringers of the first Commandment, long after French secular law had reduced them to frauds.[63]

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[63] Peter Canisius, *Certayne necessarieprinciples of religion, which may be entituled, a catechisme conteyning all the partes of the Christian and catholique fay th,* trans, and 'amplified' by T.I. ('Douai' [London], 1579[?]),sig. Civ'**; Bossy, CArw/tam/y, 119; P. Janelie, *The CatholicRefonnation* (London, 1971), 220-1.

[64] Robert Bellarmine, *An ample declaration of the Christian doctrine,* trans. Richard Hadock (Roan [i.c. English secret press), n.d. [1604?]), 120; id., J *shorte catechisme,* 52. On the catechisms of the Council of Trent, Canisius, and Bellarmine, see Elisabeth Germain, *Langages de lafoi a travers I'histoire: Mentalites* r/ra/ZrArlf (Paris, 1972), 38-52.

[65] For a brief survey of the importance attached to catechism teaching in Castile, see Jean Pierre Dedicu, ' "Christianization" in New Castile: Catechism, Communion, Mass, and Confirmation in the Toledo Archbishopric, 1540-1650', in Cruz and Perry (eds.), *Culture and Control,* 1-24. For Catalonia, see Kamen, *Phoenix and the Flame,* 348-54. Early 16th-c. Spanish catechisms are listed in José Ramon Guerrero, 'Catecismos de autorcs cspanolcs en la primera mitad del siglo xvi (1500-1559)', *Repertorio de historia de las ciencias eclesiaslicas en Espana,* 2 (1971), 225-60. On France, see Germain, *Langages de lafoi,* 63-107, and Jean-Claude Dhotel, *Les Origines du catechisme modeme d'apres les premiers manuels imprimes en France* (Paris, 1967), esp. 149-284, and 426 on the importance of catechizing to the internal missions.

[66] Georg Witzel, *Catechismus ecclesiae* (n.p., 1535), sig. Miii'; Johann Gropper, *Institutio catholica, elemenla christianae pietatis succincta brevitate complectens* (Cologne, 1550), 65; Nausea, *Catechismus catholicus,* 184-8; Helding, *Catechesis,* sigs. Fl'-F2'; Domingo de Valtanas, *Doctrina Christiana*(Seville, 1555), fos. c'-ci'; Binsfeld, *Theologie des pasteurs,* 312-27; Wittweiler, *Catholisch Hausbuch,2^\; Ar^dJ^n* Du Plessis de Richelieu, *L'lnstruction du chretien (Pms,* 1642), 130-1 (first pub. 1621); Nicolas Turlot, *Le Thresor de la doctrine chrestienne,* 2nd edn. (Douai, 1638), 536-7,562-72 For other French examples and Thiers's own invocation of the first Commandment, see Thiers, *Traite des superstitions,* i. 4-6.

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What are the implications of witchcraft’s theological and devotional association with the first Commandment? To begin with, there is the question of its association with the Decalogue at all, since, according to John Bossy’s important argument, this tied it to a crucial contemporary shift in the ‘moral system’ of Western Europe. During the Middle Ages, he has said, the categories that formed the moral awareness of ordinary Christians were those of the Seven Deadly Sins. Beginning in the thirteenth century, and accelerating decisively in the pastoral ethics of Jean Gerson, the Ten Commandments gradually took over, until, with the ‘universal diffusion’ of the catechism in the sixteenth century, they became the dominant influence on Christian ethics. Apart from their philosophical appeal to nominalists, they had the crucial advantage for reformers of all denominations of having a scriptural foundation, as well as being more precise and hard-hitting as a code of errors. In most Protestant formulations the Decalogue outweighted the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, while for the theologians at Trent it also came to represent the sum of moral obligation. ‘For Catholics as for Protestants,’ Bossy concludes, ‘the age of catechism was an age of the Commandments.’[6]’

The consequences just for the diffusion of witchcraft ideas were dramatic. All over early modern Europe, as part of what was thought to be indelible religious training, children and adult confitents of every class and creed were supposed to internalize an image of the crime. The Decalogue itself was the subject of constant reiteration—by reading, recitation, memorization, and physical display—and its obligations regarding true worship could scarcely have been missed by any church-goer. In a famous

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" Jacques Benigne Bossuet, *Catéchisme du diocèse de Meaux* (Paris, 1687), 19-20 (from ‘Catechisme qui se doit faire dans l’église et dans l’école’). Cf. Joachim Trotti de La Chétardie, *Catéchisme ou abrégé de la doctrine chrétienne* (1688), known as the ‘Catéchisme de Bourges’, repr. in id., *Cours complet de doctrine chrétienne* (2 vols.; Paris, 1844), i. 370, ii. 161 (and sec also ii. 355, for the French empire catechism which repeats all the Thomist categories of‘superstition’).

[u] *Sec, for* example, Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, *Les Devoirs d’un chrétien entersDieu, etles moyensdepouvoir biens'en acquiter* (Saint-Omer, 1772), 92-3 (first pub. 1703); cf. Francois Aimé Pouget, *Institutions catholicae in modum catecheseos* (2 vols.; Paris, 1725), i. 704, for ‘magia diabolica, sortilegium, maleficium’ (first pub. in French 1702).

[M] John Bossy, ‘Moral Arithmetic: Seven Sins into Ten Commandments’, in Leites (ed.), *Conscience and Casuistry,* 214-34 (quotation at 229); id., *Christianity,* 35-8,79-80,116-25,130. Cf. Strauss, *Luther’s House of Learning,* 349 n. 51. Bossy was anticipated by GefTcken, *Bildercatechismus des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts,* 20-2. For the dominance of the Decalogue in the teaching of the post-Reformation English church, sec Aston, *England’s Iconoclasts,* 344-70. For its growing importance in Castile, sec Dedieu, ‘ “Christianization” in New Castile’, 6,12.

statement Luther asserted that a man who had truly learned the Ten Commandments held the key to the whole of scripture; 'such a man is entitled in all matters and cases to aduse, help, console, decide, and judge things spiritual and temporal.'[70] For reasons to do with the need to stress sin and inadequacy first, in order to ensure true faith and piety later, learning the Decalogue was always the opening task in Lutheran catechisms, and often so in Calvinist ones too. Catholics were taught by an authority like Bellarmine to regard it as the best possible statement of Christian laws, on the grounds of its authorship, antiquity, universality, immutablity, necessity, and solemnity.[71] We have also seen that the demonological implications of the first Commandment were made explicit with a frequency sufficient to impress them on most of those who underwent catechism and confession. There could hardly be a better illustration of the relationship between the prevalence of a conception of witchcraft and the practical dynamics of religious reform.

Most significant of all, how* witchcraft was itself conceived was fundamentally altered by the crime's inclusion in the first Table of the Decalogue and under the first Commandment in particular. This, after all, was the most important of all the divine laws, and the sins against it outclassed all others in heinousness. The first Commandment, wrote Ciruclo,

> is also of greatest worth and sacredness. And the virtue which God commands us to practice by it is the most perfect among the moral virtues. It is the most pleasing to God... On the contrary, the sins man commits against this commandment and this virtue of religion are the most hateful of all.[72]

In Augsburg, Rhegius Urbanus taught that it was the source of all the other Commandments and gave them their strength and validity; according to Hieronymus Weller one could never study or learn from it enough.[73] Bullinger called it 'the perfect rule of godliness'.[74] In England it was said by Hooper to be 'the ground, originall, and fundation of all vertewe, godlie lawes or Christiane workes'.[75] The orthodox view, as represented in the catechisms of John Ball, was that the duties of the first Table were more excellent, 'and the breaches thereof more grievous then of the second'.[76]

The point that Bossy rightly stresses is that, once the obligation to worship God correctly was put at the summit of Christian ethics, and idolatry was made the prime offence, witchcraft became, at least for clerics, a far more serious matter than it had been when still subsumed under one or other of the Deadly Sins. There, like the Sins in general, it had been an antisocial crime—a matter of *malejicium* which, as we have seen, was the way many laypeople continued to think of it throughout the early modern period.[77] In the Decalogue, by contrast, it was an affront to the deity of the worst possible sort, a kind of anti-spirituality inspired by God’s antitype, the devil. As a sin, said the Jacobean cleric Peter Hay, it was ‘Idolatry in the Superlative degree’/8 This was the case even if witchcraft was linked to the Commandment about blasphemy (the second for Lutherans and Catholics; the third for Calvinists), since all the precepts of the first Table were designated in terms of inward duties to one’s God rather than outward duties to one’s neighbour.[79] But it was emphatically true of its connection to what Dod and Cleaver called ‘the most spirituall Commandement’.[80] ‘The developments which inspired the early-modern witch-craze ...’, says Bossy, ‘were a lurid elaboration of this original step. The more the Commandments became established as the reigning system of Christian ethics, the more persuasive the spell of the witch-syndrome proved.’ Gersonian theology was, in effect, one of the intellectual sources of the witch trials; it was the inspiration behind the Paris University decrees of 1398 on superstition, which Gerson himself probably drew up, it was adopted by his German disciples among the Dominican exponents of demonology, it had an indirect influence on the Lutheran catechism campaign of the sixteenth century, and it was echoed in the sternly Hebraic morality of Bodin’s *De la demonomanie des sorciers.* ™

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[70] Quotation (from the preface to Luther's larger catechism) in Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning,* 161.

[71] Bellarmine, *Ample declaration,* 112-13; cf. on Luther, ^™ain ^«<Ze/a>,31-L

[72] Ciruclo, *Treatise,* 77, and see also 70-7 and Jofreu's addition at 77-8, cf. Azpilcueta, *Enchiridion,*

[73] Urbanus, *Catechismus Deutsch,* sigs. Bvi'-Bvii'; Hieronymus Weller, *Der Grin Donnerstag wie man ...das Erste Gebot recht versiehen sol* (Dresden, 1582), sig. Cvn.

[74] Bullinger, *Decades,* i. 222.

[75] Hooper, *Declaration,* pp. xxxs n-xxxvm.

[76] [Ball], *Short treatise,* 180.

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[77] There are interesting parallel signs that witchcraft sceptics, for whom *accusations* of witchcraft were what was antisocial, turned, in their own attention to the Decalogue, to the ninth Commandment; see Stronks, ‘Significance of Balthasar Bckker’s The Enchanted World’, 154.

[71] Peter Hay, *A vision of Balaams asse* (London, 1616), 32, see also 34.

[79] For typical Lutheran treatments of witchcraft and the second Commandment, see F. W. Bodemann (ed.), *Katechetische Denkmale der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (Harburg, 1861), catechisms by Tctclbach (8-9), Gescnius (17), and Walther (6-7), and those adopted in Mecklenburg (12-13) and Nuremberg (10-11); Caspar Huberinus, *Derklaine Catechismus* (n.p., n.d. [1544]), sig. Avii^{r}. Dunte, *Decisiones mille et sex casuum conscientiae,* 220, argued that after the devil realized that the Gospel had made it impossible for him to establish ‘open magic *(manifesto magia)'* against the first Commandment, he made do with superstitions against the second. In 1610, in the theology faculty at Wittenberg, where would-be pastors were trained in the catechism by disputations on its various sections, Simon Wollin’s exercise on the second Commandment was to deal with the question, ‘Quid de sagarum factis factorumque poena statuendum?’; see Joannes Forsterus [the younger], *Thesaurus catecheticus, site, decades duae de viginti problematum* (Wittenberg, 1614), sigs. C2^{f}—C3’. I* or the association of witchcraft with the third Commandment among English Calvinists see above, n. 33. Sometimes, demonism and witchcraft were said to be offences against all the Commandments; see Samuel Meigerius, *De panurgia lamiarum, sagarum, strigum ac venejicarum, totiusque cohortis magicae cacodaemonia* (Hamburg, 1587), a Low German treatise that I know only from the brief commentary by Dieter Lohmeier, ‘Die Hexenschrift des Samuel Meigerius’, in C. Degn, H. Lehmann, and D. Unverhau (eds.), *Hexenprozesse: deutsche und skandinavische Beitrdge* (Neumunster, 1983), 46-58, esp. 49, where David Chytracus is said to have recommended Meigerius’s book as a ‘Decalogus veneficarum’; Samson, *Neun ... Hexen Predigt,* sigs. Tiii’-Tiv', UiMJiiP; Scribonius, Df wrenim *natura,* fos. 92’-6*.

[10] Cleaver, *A treatise or*

Whatever one makes of this particular pedigree, there is little doubt that the first Commandment provides the theological key to the reformers' view of witchcraft. Nor should we limit ourselves to the more sensational aspects of the crime. False worship in its most blatant expression might indeed take the form of sabbats; these, surely, were part-products of subsuming witchcraft more and more under God's first law.[82] But clerical demonology from Gerson onwards was mostly concerned with witchcraft's other, more usual, dimension—with its character as spiritual apostasy in situations of material and psychological need. We saw earlier how its authors were determined to convince ordinary Christians that their explanations of misfortune were misguided and that their adoption of remedies, personal or professional, amounted to demonism by the back door. The evidence of the catechisms—indeed, the very genre—bears this out, as do primers and Decalogue treatises. These were not directed at witches who flew to sabbats and worshipped the devil in a ritualized anti-religion. They were written to give children, adolescents, and supposedly ill-informed adults the bare essentials of correct religion and to make them more pious. From Luther's *Short exposition* onwards, the 'witchcraft', 'magic', and 'superstition' that occur in them were the sorts that were supposed to lie covertly in the way ordinary people regulated their lives—in their use of charms and talismans, in their resort to healers, blessers, diviners, and exorcists in sickness or loss, in their appeals to the treasure seekers and procurors of marital love.

Thus Gervase Babington, who ended up as bishop of Worcester, invoked the Calvinist third Commandment to condemn both the taking of the divine name vainly in 'conjuring, witchcraft, sorcerie, charming, and such like', and the resort to soothsayers. His arguments were the usual ones about demonic inroads into the soul: 'for the lawe that willeth a witch should die, being broken of me by using such a meanes, shall bring greater death to me without repentance.'[83] The guide to divinity published by John Downame taught that 'the good Witch no lesse then the other Witch is abominable in [God's] sight', and that the first law therefore condemned 'all going to Witches, Conjurers, and Soothsayers, and such like'.[84] According to Ursinus, explicating the Heidelberg catechism's pronouncements on magic, '... as Magicians, so they also are condemned by this commandement, whosoever use the help of Magicians'.[85] In the United Provinces, explanations of the catechism emphasized 'white'

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[12] They were rarely dealt with in Decalogue teaching itself, but see *Thefloure of the commaundementes,* sig. xv', which speaks of 'wytches and sorceresses ye whiche rydeth upon bromes[,] worshyppeth the bucke, and have oyntementes and thynges dyabolykes'; cf. Brochmand, *Systema universae theologiae,* 68-9, and Benedicti, *Somme des pechez,* 46. The best example of a full-scale demonology (including sabbats) being written to illustrate sins against the first Commandment is Daniel Drovin s; see *Les vengeances divines, de la transgression des sainctesordonnances de Dieu, seton t'ordredes dix commandemens,* fos. 184-260'; cf. Michaelis, *Discourse of spirits,* 71; Fomer, *Panoplia armaturae Dei,* 51,54,73; Osuna, *Flagellum diaboli,* dedication by the German translator Egidius Albertinus, and see also fo. *59".* The demonology published by René Benoist as *Petit fragment catechistic* was described as part of a fuller catechism, yet to come; for his complete catechisms, see Dhotel, *Origines du catechisme,* 440.

•> Gervase Babington, *A very fruitfull exposition of the commaundements by way of questions and answeres for greater plainnesse* (London, 1583), 137-^14 (quotation at 144).

[M] *Summe of sacred divinitie,\56.*

[11] Ursinus, *Summe of Christian religion*, **818**; cf. Bastingius, *An exposition,* fos. 128'-9 .

magic and its dangers 'almost to the point of obsession'.[86] In 1658 an English catechism writer bracketed as devilry both 'practising witchcraft our selves and consulting with those that do upon any occasion whatever, as the recovery of our health, our goods, or whatever else'.[87] The same emphasis is evident in the mid-sixteenth-century Catholic catechism by the bishop of Vienna, Friedrich Nausea, which condemns those 'who consult either soothsayers, augurs, witches and enchanters, interpreters of dreams, diviners, pythonesses, or magicians, to ask for news, search for secrets, fortell the future, recover lost things, free themselves or their animals from sicknesses, or seek anything else that is of God alone and his bare Word',[88] and, again, in one of the most popular Catholic examples of the *Hausbuch,* by the Jesuit Georg Wittweiler, where running to soothsayers to discover lost goods and using charms to cure illnesses or find husbands stand as the first transgressions against the law.[89]

The texts of the casuists accord very much with the same pastoral priorities. In Coburg, for example, in Andreas Kesler's *Gewissensfrage* against crystal-gazers, blessers, wizards, witches, and wise men and women, it was their clients who were said to break the first Commandment.[90] The English recusant William Warford asked penitents to scrutinize their consciences in the light of this Commandment in case they had 'given credit to any sort of superstitions, enchantments, divinings: or used them eyther by [themselves], or by meanes of others', used lots or talismans, or given credit to dreams or soothsayings.[91] What is striking about the constant appeal to this Commandment, then, is that it is these perennial, diurnal failings of the laity that were being elevated to the highest level of depravity. The witchcraft of the Decalogue was, in fact, the same unsensational phenomenon as the witchcraft of the Seven Deadly Sins—a witchcraft of misfortune and its management. What was transformed was its significance; from a social it became a psychological sin. In the Catholic context its history, in effect, matched that of the sacrament of penance itself, for which so much Decalogue teaching was a preparation. From an instrument for resolving 'offences and conflicts otherwise likely to disturb the peace of the community', it had become a vehicle for self-examination and personal instruction. The first duty of those who resorted (in the manner forbidden in the catechisms) to witchcraft, like that of sinners in general, was now reconciliation with God rather than with the community.[92]

In the Decalogue texts of the Protestant and Catholic Reformations alike the first

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“ Gijswijt-Hofstra, 'Witchcraft', 82.

[87] [Richard Allestree], *The whole duty* o/Wa ” laidd○Wn in ○ p,ain and *foliar way* (London, 1658), 61 (not in a discussion of the Decalogue).

“ Nausea, *Catechismuscalholicus,* 184

" Wmwrik,. *OUU* llmM, 241-2, sec also on 'black' witchcraft, 2(” ,71–

[90] 9i 353-4.

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Commandment was said to enjoin precisely the inward virtues and condemn precisely the inward (and contrary) faults that (as we saw in earlier chapters) clerical writers on witchcraft repeatedly emphasized.« Here, in summary, was the essential theology behind early modern demonology, a theology that made witchcraft primarily a spiritual crime. The first Commandment was the one that, in the dogmatics, casuistrj, and catechisms of the age, required Christians to know, love, trust, honour, and fear God.[94] It condemned anything that got in the way of this relationship or took his place in it. Its end, wrote Ursinus, was 'the inward or internal worship of god, that is, that due honor may be given unto god in the mind, wil, and heart of man.'[95] To love or trust other beings or things was idolatry, to fear them led to superstition and the practice of protective magic.

Commentators also used this Commandment to explain and promise providential protection even in the direst of adversities. It was the Commandment of tribulation and its spirituality, as the English divine Lancelot Andrewes explained at length.[96] It applied especially, according to John Knewstub, in 'any streight or neccessitie', when too many people ignored God's help and went instead 'unto witches, wisemen, or wisewomen (as they call them) to have their griefes remedied, and their wantes supplied'.[97] A Devonshire cleric taught his catechism pupils that it showed that they must 'be thankefull for every thing; health and sickenesse, prosperity, and adversity'.[98] In Martin Buccr's short catechism children were to learn from the first Commandment that the good and the bad came from one God not two kinds of person.[99] What was invariably demanded was precisely what religious demonology also presupposed—the patient suffering of dangers and 'crosses' in the Jobian manner and the seeking to God for help, even if, as Dod and Cleaver again put it, 'wee have all the

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” For further Lutheran treatments of sins against the first Commandment, cast in the form of the *Teufelbuch,* see Robert Kolb, 'God, Faith, and the Devil: Popular Lutheran Treatments of the First Commandment in the Era of the Book of Concord', *Fides el Histona,* 15(1982), 71—89.

** For some typical elaborations, see Andreas Musculus, Ca/erAirmw." *Kinderpredig, wiediein... Brandenburgk und... Niirnberg... gepredigt werden* (Frankfurt/Oder, 1566), sigs. Avii^r—Ci'; Heinrich Salmuth, *Catechismus. Das ist, Die Fiimembslen Heuptstuch der heiligen Christlichen Lehr* (Budissin, 1581), sigs. Cviii'-Eii'; Nicolaus Hunnius, *Anweisung zum rechten Christenthumbfirjunge und einfdltige Leute im Haus und Schulen zugebrauchen* (Nuremberg, 1639), 94-100; Becon, *Catechism,* 56-9; Babington, *Fruitfull exposition of the commandements,* 22-83; Richard Alleine, *A breife explanation of the common catechism,* (London, 1630), sigs. B3'-B4^r; Bellarmine, Jmp/e<Z«/ararion, 117-19.

” Ursinus, *Summe of Christian religion,* 812; cf. Gcrvase Scarbrough, *The summe of all godly andprofitable catechismes, reduced into one* (London, 1623), 8.

« Lancelot Andrewes, *A pattern ofcatechistical doctrine,* m id., *If Ms,* eds. J. P. Wilson and James Bliss v r 184 122, sp. 4-18

(1 '"“j^SeiswbJ^Vi *^~upon*heta>lniithisiq}chapterofExodus,andcerteineotherplace$ofscripture* (London, 1577), 1–20 (quotation at 12).

98 William Crompton, *An explication ofthoseprinciples ofChristian religion, exprest or implyed in the catechisme* (London, 1633), 94; cf. Hooper, *Declaration,* pp. ln-lvn; John Bristow, *An exposition of th ce crede the lordsprayer, the tenne commandements, and the sacraments. Catechetically composed* (London, 1627), 7

8^'"Manin Bucer,Afu7tzerCarrrAHmur (1537), in Ernst-Wilhelm Kohls (ed.h£vangr/«rAetfaterAirmni *der Reformationszeit vor und neben Martin Luthers* ^'"7pV"'i t«A B fi' Bi J *hismus* (Gütersloh, 1 1), 50; cf. Simon Musaeus, *Nutzlicher Unnterricht, vom Ersten Gebot* (n.p. [Erfurt), 1557), sigs. Bin

world against us’.[100] Ursinus urged that the first law taught sufferers ‘neither in respect of the grief which [adversities] bring, to murmur against God, or to do any thing against his commandements, but in our dolor and grief to retain stil the confidence and hope of gods assistance, and to aske deliverance of him, and by this knowlege and ful persuasion of gods wil to mitigate and assuage our grief and paines.’[101] Concretely, the first Commandment held out the certainty of divine control of the devil and the wicked, but not just in moral terms. George Gifford, matching his witchcraft writings, spoke in his catechism of the way God brought bad weather, despite the ‘common opinion’ that it came from demons.[102] It is true that parts of the Creed and Lord’s Prayer could also yield these same encouragements and warnings; the Genevan catechism, for example, elaborated the control of demons implied in the phrase ‘creator of heaven and earth’.[103] But only the first Commandment could charge those who ignored these comforting ideas with the sin of idolatry. Those who broke it were those who, ignorant of God, mistrusted his promises of help, and dishonoured him by turning in their needs to ‘creatures’ and, thus, to the devil.

From the clerical point of view, then, the first Commandment was at the root of everything we have been examining in this sequence of chapters. Witchcraft, magic, and superstition were not, of course, the only sins against it, but they were seen as particularly pure examples of its transgression; we, indeed, can see that they were defined by that transgression. Where they were concerned, ‘reformation’ depended on the success with which the first Commandment could be instilled in the thoughts and actions of individual Christians. The means that were chosen, above all catechism training and penitential routines, reveal the nature of the challenge; by the middle of the seventeenth century it was being stressed that the catechism, the simple person’s Bible, enforced as part of household discipline, was the best way to prevent magical practices.[104] But these means also indicate the dramatic scope of the enterprise, which was nothing less than to alter the cultural habits of ordinary Europeans across a broad spectrum of their daily experiences. This is the reason why ‘acculturation’—the topic I turn to next—has entered the vocabulary of historians of the witch trials.

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[100] Dod and Cleaver, *Treatise... upon the ten commandments,* 50.

[101] Ursinus, *Summe of Christian religion,* 814.

[102] G[iffard], *Cathechisme,* sig. A5’; cf. Gerhard, *True tryall,* 30-1; Bunny, *Whole summe of Christian religion,* sig. 36’.

[103] [illegible] Franck, *School of Faith,* 9-10. Cf. on the Creed, Spangenberg, *Gross Catechismus,* sig. Jvii’; Nowell, *Catechisme,* fo. 25; Salmuth, *Catechismus,* sig. ii’; *Catechism of the Council of Trent,* 20-6, 78. [illegible] Lord’s Prayer, see Luther’s ‘Short Exposition’, 90-5; *Catechism of the Council of Trent,* 477-86.

[104] See, notably, Christianus Gross, Christlicher Bericht *von und wieder Zauberey* (Colberg, 1661), [illegible].

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Acculturation by Text

> Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.
>
> (Acts 28:25-7)

> It is also to be considered, that there is among the Protestants in general, a great deal of difference between the common People and the learned; it is true, that there is likewise to be discovered some difference between those two kinds of People, among the Papists.
>
> (Balthasar Bckker, *World bewitch'd)*

‘ACCULTURATION’ is not a particularly happy neologism, but it continues to signify something useful. At first, it was applied, rather blandly, to the interpenetration that was assumed to occur whenever very different cultures came into sustained contact for the first time—as if mutual assimilation was the principal vehicle of the changes that resulted. On the contrary, profound inequalities have usually marked the exchanges taking place between contiguous cultures, and thus acculturation subsequently came to refer mainly to the repression by some dominant group of the cultural forms of a subordinate one. In this guise, it offered an obvious model for the development of non-European societies under the impact of early modern colonialism.’ But acculturation has also been said to have occurred inside early modern Europe, largely in association with the Protestant and Catholic Reformations. The cultural distance that separated the aims of the religious reformers (and their secular backers among the European states) from the ideas and behaviour of the mass of the laity seemed to be great enough to invite comparison with the colonial confrontations overseas. The very broad extent of the popular beliefs and practices that the reformers hoped to eradicate, or drastically modify, also indicated the proscription of a whole culture, rather than piecemeal or narrowly focused change. And the methods chosen for the task, including surveillance, forcible conversion, repression, and punishment, as well as huge educational programmes, suggested the imposition of cultural superiority by dominant elites on subject populations. Europe, it seems, had its own internal missions.[2]

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[1] See the classic study of Nathan Wachtel, *La Vision des vaincus: Les Indiens du Perou devant la conquite espagnole, 1530-1570/80* (Paris, 1971).

[1] See esp. Delumeau, *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire,* 175-202; Muchembled, *Popular*

During the 1970s it became Robert Aluchembled's principal thesis, and to some extent Jean Dclumeau's, that the prosecution of witches was one of the most important vehicles of this internal European acculturation. This was because they saw the early modern witch as both a direct embodiment of its main targets and an indirect product of its effects. On the one hand, the argument ran, the drive to impose exacting new standards of knowledge, piety, and moral discipline inevitably inflated the conceptions of error and sin held by clerics, along with their view that these failings had demonic causes. Acculturation seemed to be in stalemate, even to its champions, through much of the seventeenth century, and this, too, convinced them that it was meeting sinister obstacles. At the same time, missionary zeal brought churchmen into closer than ever contact with a popular lay culture of which they fundamentally disapproved. Devil-worship was the obvious explanation for the various protective magics to which ordinary people often turned, but it could be blamed for virtually anything that reformers found amiss—for all the 'ignorance', 'paganism', and 'superstition' that stood in their way. The missionaries, Muchembled once said, simply inverted popular culture and called it witchcraft. Witches were the deviants of Christianization, with 'witchcraft' acting as a catch-all term of cultural censure and conquest.

At the same time, acculturation—together with important socio-economic developments that coincided with it—brought such fundamental changes to rural communities that they themselves went through a critical period. Old solidarities declined; new polarities emerged. The countryside became divided in terms of both material interests and commitment to the new ideals. In these circumstances, it produced its own witches, blaming them for all the frictions and conflicts that now emerged between neighbours, and, more importantly, projecting onto them the fears, anxieties, and guilty feelings aroused by the cultural revolution being imposed from above. Accusing them and watching them suffer helped the better-offand those sympathetic to acculturation to re-establish a sense of communal cohesion and conformity. Witches, therefore, were not just a direct creation of the Christian;™ process; they were expiatory victims of the 'destructuration' that resulted from it, by-products of the 'pathology of an entire civilization'. In the villages of the Cambrésis and the adjacent territories of the Spanish Netherlands (Muchembled's geographical focus), serious witchcraft prosecutions began with the onset of the missionary programme in the 1580s and declined after a hundred years of zeal had brought enough reform to the countryside to make witchcraft a 'useless' concept.[3]

Culture, *passim*. For more recent studies stressing these elements of acculturation, without ujmg mt mm, ate Mupuiii-Duuiiidi, Represslan des des 117-43; Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline,* esp. 89-121,187 acculturation); Strauss, 'The Reformation and states that 'The catholic reform movement... of the greatest repressive enterprises *curb* into 'moral policemen'.

[3] I have the

From the start, there have been criticisms of the use of the acculturation model in studies of cultural change in early modern Europe.[4] It could lead to condescending interpretations of later medieval popular culture (and of popular piety in particular), and exaggeration of the extent of its subsequent transformation.[5] Such was the capacity of ordinary people to appropriate, adapt, or deflect ‘foreign’ cultural items, that the interaction between them and their would-be reformers must have been more significant and the gap between missionary intentions and achievements more considerable than acculturation historians allowed for. In any case, the model assumed a greater cultural distance between the élite and the mass of the population than may actually have existed. Many of the cultural forms at issue, including those designated as ‘magical’ or ‘superstitious’, were trans-social in character, only their use being specific to particular social contexts.[6] A Europe in which very different socio-economic groups were, even beyond the seventeenth century, culturally interpenetrative was thus quite unlike a newly colonized territory in the Americas.

Formidable research would be needed if these problems were to be clarified—in particular, if Muchembled’s application of the ‘acculturation thesis’ to witchcraft trials in the Cambrésis was to warrant its general adoption in witchcraft studies.[7] Meanwhile, there is the question of the texts. It will be abundantly clear from what has gone before that in early modern demonology the perceptions of an educated male minority concerning the shortcomings of general lay culture were recorded in an especially direct and vivid form. We have seen too that, in this respect, demonology was an important strand in a much wider campaign, undertaken by both major Reformations, to alter and then regulate lay beliefs and behaviour by education, preaching, and publishing. It was clearly one contribution to that attempt to change the habits of whole populations that Peter Burke dubbed ‘the reform of popular culture’.[8] The result was undoubtedly a cultural caricature; attempts to treat clerical writings on magic and witchcraft as ethnographic reports are unrewarding.

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and Christianity’, in Forster and Ranum (eds.), *Ritual, Religion, and the Sacred,* 213-36; (2) id., ‘Sorcières du Cambrésis: L’Acculturation du monde rural aux xvf et xvif siècles’, in Dupont-Bouchat, FrijhofF, and Aluchcmbled, *Prophètes et sorciers dans les Pays-Bas,* 155-261 (and in the same vol., id., ‘Satan ou les hommes?’ see esp. 27-32); partly trans, as ‘The Witches of the Cambrésis: The Acculturation of the Rural World in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, in Obelkevich (ed.), *Religion and the People,* 221-76; (3) id., *Popular Culture,passim* but esp. 235-78. Essays (1) and (2) were republished in id., *Sorcières, justice et société,*

[4] Examples, with further refs, to the history of‘acculturation’ as a concept, are Peter Burke, ‘A Question of Acculturation?’, in *Scienze, credenze occulte, livelli di cultura,* 197-204; Jean Wirth, ‘Against the Acculturation Thesis’, in K. von Grcycrz (ed.), *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800* (London, 1984), 66-78. See also Grcyerz’s own introduction to the same volume, 1-14.

[5] On the first danger, see Stuart Clark, ‘French Historians and Early Modern Popular Culture’, *Past and Present,* 100 (1983), 62-99; on the second, Strauss, ‘Reformation and its Public’, 194-214.

[6] For some illuminating remarks on the category of cultural use, see Roger Chartier, ‘Culture as Appropriation: Popular Cultural Uses in Early Modern France’, in Kaplan (ed.), *Understanding Popular Culture,* 229-53.

[7] Muchembled himself has moved away from this kind of analysis of cultural change. For a recent critical assessment of his original arguments, see Briggs, *Communities of Belief, 53-7.*

[8] Burke, *Popular Culture,* 207, and, more generally, 207-43; cf. above, Ch. 30.

The texts also hide the degree of both uniformity and exchange between the minority and majority cultures; on the contrary, they speak in terms of exclusivity and (what we might call) cultural apartheid. Again, they reveal next to nothing of the progress and fortunes of acculturation in its actual impact on real communities. In all these respects, as in so many others, they refer only to themselves—to the conditions of their creation, the notions that inform them, and their organizing principles.

Yet there remains a prima-facie case for seeing them, at least in *intention,* as one of the purest examples of cultural proscription to be found anywhere in early modern history. And what was intended is surely not an inconsiderable part of what we need to know about acculturation, even if it was never effected. Important, too, are the images, however stereotyped and inaccurate, that the cultural groups involved had of each other—images that, in the case of the literate classes, were likely to find their way into print. ‘The dominant culture may misinterpret,’ it has been said, ‘but it has the power to make its misinterpretation stick.” One of the most persistent images held by the European reformers was precisely that they were faced by conditions like those in the New World or the Far East. There exists, then, the possibility of what I will call ‘acculturation by text’, a feature that we can test for in the case of demonology if we read it in the light of two of the defining aspects of the missionary experience—the perception of a great disparity between the donors and recipients of cultural goods, and the need to treat the latter’s cultural transgressions with severity.

* * *

Acculturation originates in remoteness and thrives on reversal. But if historians are sometimes still unsure about the exact nature of the discrepancies between official Christianity and lay religion in the age of the Reformations, writers on demonology were convinced that they were huge. ‘Meere Gentiles, and Pagans in religion’ was how the Englishman Henry Holland described the clients of village magicians.[9] [10] * By the seventeenth century, according to a recent study, ‘educated clerics had become convinced that France was a “pays de mission”, many of whose inhabitants knew nothing of true Christianity, and practised a religion based on paganism and superstition.’[11] Throughout Europe, popular errors and clerical truths were represented as opposites, in a manner reminiscent of the arguments *a contrariis* that were examined at the outset of this book. When cunning men and women adopted the ritual utterances of the Church, explained one critic, they were only mimicking religiosity demon-style, having ‘alwaies another, yea a contrary entent and meaning’.[12] Superstition, we also recall, was ‘religion’s opposite’, the antithesis of true worship. With impressive zeal, one Lutheran managed to make it contrary to five of the Commandments, three articles of the Creed, and four petitions of the Lord’s Prayer.[13] In the sphere of lay witchcraft beliefs, the change in attitudes and behaviour which reformers required fell little short of total: a complete conceptual translation of the categories that were thought to shape ordinary people’s lives was aimed at. Looking back, we notice that clerical and popular beliefs about misfortune are to be found at opposite ends of the spectrum of accountability. A wide gulf also opened up between spiritualized and this-worldly readings of everyday experience. Providentialism concerning witches was intended to supplant what many saw as a Manichaean tendency in popular religion. According to Johann Brcnz, for example, some of his fellow Germans were ‘just like the Marcionite heretics, who believed in, or made, two gods’.[14] Moral absolutism and moral precision likewise replaced the contingent, eclectic, and essentially pelagian morality that George Gifford condemned as ‘country divinity’.[15] Matters of principle overrode matters of custom and tradition. At the same time, the boundaries between natural causation, demonic causation, and supernatural causation were redrawn for ordinary folk, and, in consequence, a great many of their everyday recipes and techniques were denounced as having no efficacy.

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[9] Burke, ‘A Question of Acculturation?’, in *Scienze, credenze occulte, livelli di cultura.* 201

[10] Holland, *Treatise*, sig. F4^{r}, see also F4’. [11] Briggs, *Communities of Belief.* 230.

[12] Mason, *Anaiomie of torcerie.* 59.

[12] Vischer, *Einfellliger... Bericht wider den... Segen.* sigs. Diiii'-Niiii*.

Everywhere, the categories of‘good’ and ‘evil’ behaviour were reversed. Witches traditionally assumed by villagers to be harmful in matter-of-fact physical ways *(inalejicium)* were now said to be, in some higher theological sense, vehicles of spiritual benefits brought by a better understanding of providence and sin. Those local healers and diviners who brought much needed physical relief to the same villagers were, instead, the really significant agents of the devil, and their witchcraft was, accordingly, much more dangerous. Those who consulted them were no longer Christians but ‘pagans’ or ‘heathens’; indeed, they too were little better—probably worse—than the witches against whom they sought redress. A particularly pure example of the assault on popular cultural priorities is the constant reiteration in the texts of the idea (which Boguet traced to St John Chrysostom[16]) that it was better to die in piety with God than be healed by the devil’s magic. ‘Should not a righteous Christian’, demanded the Lutheran Bernhard Albrecht, ‘prefer a thousand times to be ill and in hardship with God, than be healthy with the devil? Should he not rather die with God than live with the devil?’[17] The great Jesuit scholar Juan Maldonado agreed that victims of affliction must turn to God, especially if death was near.[18] Here lay a difference of kind between the moral preferences of many of the laity and the ambitions of the agents of acculturation—a difference that surely helps to explain the latter’s limited success.

Popular incomprehension of pastoral aims may well have grown, as much as anything, from the very completeness of the opposition[19]—this, at least, is what the texts

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[14] Brcnz, *On Hailstorms,* 214.

[15] George Gifford, *A briefe discourse ofcertaine points of the religion, which is among the common sort of Christians, which may be termed the countrie divinitie* (London, 1581); Wallace, ‘George Gifford , 29-31, 36-8,43-6; Briggs, *Communities of Belief* 275.

»• Boguet, *Examen of Witches,* 113, citing Chrysostom’s eighth Homily on the Epistle to the Colossians.

[17] Albrecht, *Magia,* 47, sec also 255; cf. Platz, *Kurtzer... bericht,* sigs. FiiP-Fiv'; Riidinger, *Decas concionum secunda, de magia illicita,* 239; Vischer, *Einfeltiger ... Bericht wider den ... Segen,* sigs. Cvi, Eiii'-Eiiii', Gi’, Oiiii'; Gaule, *Cases of conscience,* 167; Daneau, *Dialogue,* sig. Kviii^{r}.

[11] *Mildonido, Tŕaicte des anges el demons, fo.23*\\

” As well as from its fragility and reversibility in coping with the ‘confusing similarity (in Calvinist would have us think. Again and again, the authors try to answer the sorts of objections supposedly voiced by those who still turned, personally or as clients, to magical practices: how can magic be evil if the intention behind it is good and when it brings aid to its users; how can it be evil if the means used are derived from religious sources, like scriptural texts or prayers, or inspire a kind of faith; how can it be evil to use such means as a last resort when all others have failed?[20] Perhaps these were indeed the questions put to writers of demonology by their puzzled flocks; there was, after all, a reassuring symmetry in the belief (which Perkins attributed to the 'common people') that 'a man may goe to wizards, called wisemen, for counsell: because God hath provided a salve for every sore.'[21] In this case their uniformity across many texts would suggest mental structures profoundly unsympathetic to the new ethic, as well as a shared awareness in the authors of what, given their missionary experience, they were up against. Uniformity may, on the other hand, only betray rhetorical habit, and a traditional way of misrepresenting popular rationality so as to facilitate its suppression; both St Augustine and St John Chrysostom, after all, had written of the same problems, listing the same popular excuses, and they were evidently a devotional issue for eve-of-Reformation clerics like Richard Whitford.[22] But whatever the relationship between reporting and imagining—between type and stereotype—the result was a further series of transpositions. Replying to these counter-arguments involved a kind of looking-glass logic that moved from apparent help to real harm, supposed gain to actual loss, pretended piety to achieved superstition. It was not what worked that mattered, chorused the clerics, but what was permitted. The language used by John Gaule is built, typically, on such switches. To those claiming the right intentions in consulting magicians, he counters that a 'good meaning will not warrant the use of ill means.' The devil 'never did anything like to good, but for the greater ill... and never told Truth, but to deceive.' Goods located by divination were 'lost though found'; losers of them who rejected the diviner's help were gainers in God's eyes. What business is it of anyone's, is the challenge thrown down by Gaule's hypothetical consumer of magic. His reply has the authentic sound of acculturation by text: 'Yes, the Church has to doe with it, and censure it, as inconsistent with her

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theology) between divine and demonic afflictions; see Ann Kibbey, 'Mutations of the Supernatural: Witchcraft, Remarkable Providences, and the Power of Puritan Men', *American Quart.*, 34 (1982), 125–148.

[20] For a particularly detailed Protestant example, see Platz, *Kurtzer... bericht*, sigs. Dvi'-Hii'. Others are Bernard, *Guide to grand-jury men*, 144–50; Gifford, *Dialogue*, sigs. E3'-H1'; Holland, *Treatise*, sigs. F4'–G2', [illegible] G1'; [illegible] *Verden ...Segen*, sigs. Cii'-Cv', Qiiii'-Rii'; Ellinger, *Hexen Coppel*, [illegible] *Warnung*, 9; Samson, *Neun ... Hexen Predigt*, sigs. Qiv- Kesler, *Theologia Casuum Conscientiae*, 355-69; Daneau, *Dialogue*, sig. Kvi'; Hemmingsen, *Admonitio*, sigs. M7'-N1'. For Catholic equivalents, see Lonchius, *Aberglaub*, 93-112; Forner, *Panoplia armaturae Dei*, 29-35, 76-83; Thiers, *Traite des superstitions*. 1.451-62.

[21] William Perkins, *The foundation of christian religion gathered into sixe principles* (Cambridge 1601) sig. A3' (first pub. 1590).

[22] Whitford, *Werke for housholders*. sig. Ci?-. Bristol, *Carnival and Theater*. 45, speaks of popular culture surviving in 'images, descriptions and characterizations ... that are primarily useful for its suppression or at least marginalization'.

communion ... The State hath to doe with it, and punish it, as enemy to the Society thereof.... Nay, and every private Christian hath to doe with it, to complaine of the grievous scandall thereof, and require satisfaction.’[21] * [23]

Many Protestant authors made this attempt to anticipate and then invert lay arguments in favour of magic, Albrecht on three occasions in one book.[24] Some, like Henry Holland, Robert Holland, and George Gifford, put them into the mouths of the lay antagonists of reforming clerics in imaginary dialogues. But, again, there was no Protestant monopoly. Bishop Forner of Bamberg alleged these main pretexts for superstitious healing; it was a last resort in *extremis,* it involved no demons, it really worked and thus conformed to God’s will, it made use of religious forms and could not, therefore, be wholly bad, and it was employed by the good and honest. Like the Protestant pastors, Forner simply subverted these arguments by turning them into their opposites. He intruded the usual all-knowing, all-deceiving devil, anxious to destroy souls by saving bodies; and he set up the same rigid polarities between efficacy and legitimacy, true religious usages and superstitions, and seeming goodness and real piety.[25]

Clerical demonology was a place of confrontation, then, between what its authors saw as incompatible belief structures. So great is the distance which a text like Gifford’s *Dialogue* opens up between its participants that one often has the sensation that, on all the issues raised by witchcraft and magic, they are talking at conceptual cross-purposes. Some way into the conversation, the peasant ‘Samuel’, who ought already to be wavering, recounts a typical case of witchcraft as he sees it—that is, from the initial stage of the witch’s malice, through the illness wrought on her victim, and the magical diagnosis and identification of her guilt, to her true arraignment, confession, and execution. He confidently asks why this should not be taken at face value. In effect, ‘Daniel’ reconstructs the story in a quite different idiom. The instigating quarrel and the witch’s feelings of vengeance were caused by the devil, in the sense that he ruled in her heart at the moment of intention. The injuries to the victim were the result of natural causes, foreseen by the devil, although they could, in principle, have been inflicted by his own natural actions. And the devil deceived both the cunning man, into giving the false information that the victim had died of bewitchment, and the witch, into giving a false confession about her own and her familiar’s powers.[26] Presumably Gifford hoped that Essex villagers would come to recognize this hidden agenda in every traditional witchcraft narrative. But for them to see familiar actions and events as so unlike what they seemed to be required reconceptualization on a major scale, and only constant clerical intervention could avoid the absurdity of them never knowing, in any particular instance, how to choose between the appearance of phenomena and their ‘demonological’ reality. As the dialogue closes, we are not sure that anyone who needs to be has in fact been convinced —

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[21] Gaule, *Cases of conscience*, 162,163-4,165—6,160-1.

[24] Albrecht, Aftfgw, 44-8,178-81,257.

[25] Forner, *Panoplia armaturae Dei*, see also 76-9, 29-33.

[24] Gifford, *Dialogue*, sigs. D4’-E3^r.

'acculturized', we might say. Nor, it seems, was Gifford sure. He leaves Samuel confused on the central issue—whether or not the practices of the rural cunning men and women were just as much a kind of witchcraft as *maleficium* itself—and, at the very last moment, he allows a local healer, 'Goodwife R', to re-state the claims for a beneficent magic. The argument is not closed, but deferred, an emblem, surely, of acculturation itself.[27]

It should be added—with questions about the success or failure of acculturation by text in mind—that these dramatic conceptual reversals often rested paradoxically on the flimsiest and most arbitrary of distinctions. The whole difference between religious correctness and incorrectness, with all the fearful consequences that were supposed to ensue from the second, was ultimately a matter of such theological and natural philosophical nicety that its rationale must frequently have remained a mystery. The difficulties in deciding between the natural efficacy and non-efficacy of any action suspected of being 'superstitious' were compounded by the admission that there were many obscure virtues in nature, either unknown or known only to natural philosophers, that might bring about apparently causeless effects and, thus, seem vain and superstitious.[28] They were enough to tie up Catholic casuists like Sanchez and Valentia for pages.[29] In these circumstances, it was a matter of bluff to say, as Joseph Hall did, that it was 'not hard to determine' how far the power of nature extended when determining cases of conscience.[30] And Perkins neatly undercut the very distinction itself when he allowed for 'superstitious' actions to have a real *and* divinely approved issue after all, that God might further test the faithful.[31] So too did Castañega, when admitting that remedies for sickness that were prima facie superstitious could still be used by doctors, 'because many times the patient's imagination is fortified with them and they therefore aid in achieving a rapid cure'.[32] While Gerson (like so many others) decried the hanging of parchments with mysterious words or unknown characters on them round the neck to procure good fortune, Hendrik van Gorcum permitted exactly the same formal action provided it was done reverently and the words were the names of the three Magi.[33] Even after the Catholic Reformation was well under way, this much analysed instance of superstition was still being purified in the same fashion. It was again allowed, for example, by the Franciscan Manuel Rodriguez, on condition that the names and characters were only recognized ones and considered holy, that there was no suggestion of their power to invoke demons, and that no faith was placed simply in the manner in which they were written.[34] This was an instance that the inquisitor Giovanni Alberghini also had difficulty in resolving, together with the distinction between expecting and hoping for an effect when pronouncing words.[35]

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[27] Gifford, *Dialogue*, sigs. M3r-M4*.

[28] See, for example, Castro-Palao, *Opera omnia*, iii. 387-91; Castafiega, *Tratado*, 310.

[29] [illegible]ch[illegible] *Opus morale* [illegible] Pra[illegible]P[illegible]a deCalOgi 1 332 ff.; Valentia, *Commentariorum theologicorum*, iii. cols JSSff.

[30] Hail, *Cases of conscience*, 182.

[31] Perkins, *Golden chaine*, in *Workes*, i. 43.

[32] Castaflega, *Tratado*, 310.

[33] [illegible] Bonney, 'Autour de Jean Gerson', 96-7; cf. Castaflega, T[illegible], 311; Gieli[illegible], 'Netherlandic Theologians Views, 44-5.

[34] Rodriguez, *Summa casuum conscientiae*, 10.

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If the evidence for acculturation by text is strong where perceptions of distance and sought-for transformation are concerned, it is more ambiguous when we turn to the issues of transgression and punishment. Just how severely did clerical authors regard witchcraft? One influential view is that Protestant providentialism made for moderation, precisely because it focused attention on the victim's conscience rather than the criminality of the witch. This was a move away from the model of Moses towards the model of Job, and it helped to mollify the tenor of witchcraft trials in the Lutheran south-west of Germany, as well as leading to comparably mild prosecution in all the European states with Erastian Protestant churches.[36] But few pastors or theologians thought that witches were guiltless, and we must bear in mind their extension of the category of 'witchcraft', and its Mosaic penalties, not only to most countryside healers and diviners but to their clients as well. In this respect, Catholic views, too, could be marked by moderation in one direction and severity in others. None of this, however, was incompatible with the desire to restructure popular beliefs and behaviour by reversing the priorities on which they were founded. For it was the way ordinary people were said to treat their own and their neighbours' transgressions that prompted the, again, very different reactions of their clerical mentors. Quite simply, where the clerics thought the laity was intolerant in its views, they themselves counselled restraint; while in those areas where the clerics were severe, ordinary men and women could scarcely see any sin at all.

Certainly the doubts and hesitations of the Wiirttemberg clergy were widely shared in Protestant Europe. As we have seen, it was fundamental to pastoral demonology as a whole that victims of misfortune exaggerated or otherwise misunderstood its supposed origin in the malevolence of individuals, and that they were foolish to think of eradicating it by eradicating witches. Religious rather than punitive remedies were to be sought. With some help from the universal assumption that witches wielded no independent physical powers of their own, this made for a kind of temperance in apportioning responsibility, and in Denmark, at least, may even have contributed to the cessation of trials.[37] In Germany itself there were many others besides Brcnz and his Wiirttemberg colleagues who denounced the hatred and vindictiveness shown to those who were thought to bring bad weather. Johann Ellingcr, in particular, complained of the haste with which people wished to get anyone suspected of using sorcery to the stake.[38] The Dutch theologian Gisbertus Voetius warned against the acceptance of doubtful proofs and the condemnation of the innocent, although this was long after the last death sentence for witchcraft in the

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” Albcrghini, *Manuale qualificatorum sandiu. Inquisitions,* 128-9, see also 129-30,135-6.

[34] Midelfort, *Witch Hunting,* 36-56; Monter, *Ritual, Myth and Magic,* 28-30; SchwerhofT, Rationalitat im Wahn', 68-72.

” Johansen, 'Witchcraft, Sin and Repentance', 420.

“ Ellinger, *Hcxcn Coppd,* Dedtcatto .

Republic.[39] In England the same popular excesses were condemned by Gifford in Essex, Bernard in Somerset, and Gaulc in Huntingdonshire. Gifford spoke of ‘a broyle against old women, which can any wayes be suspected to be witches, as if they were the very plagues of the world, and as if all would be well, and safe from such harmes, if they were rooted out, and thus they fall a rooting out without all care’. The raging hostility towards witches, Bernard said, was ‘vaine, dissolute, and irreligious’, and he even asked for ‘patience’ towards them.[40]

Gaule’s Great Staughton parish was one of those that the witch-finder Matthew-Hopkins intended to visit during 1646. This was to Gaule’s great dismay, since, although he accepted the reality of witchcraft, calling it ‘the most great and grievous, the most deadly and damnable sin, that a mortall man [nr!] may be guilty of’, he thought that those who exaggerated it and discovered witches everywhere were more dangerous than those who denied its existence altogether. Indeed, they discredited the well-grounded belief in witchcraft by their very extremes:

> every old woman with a wrinkled face, a furr’d brow, a hairy lip, a gobber tooth, a squint eye, a squeaking voycc, or a scolding tongue, having a rugged coate on her back, a skull-cap on her head, a spindle in her hand, and a Dog or Cat by her side, is not only suspected, but pronounced for a witch. Every new disease, notable accident, mirable of nature, rarity of art, nay and strange work or just judgment of God, is by them accounted for no other, but an act or effect of witchcraft.[41]

This is very like the language of Reginald Scot, but Gaulc was far from Scot’s almost total scepticism. What he wished to see was not an end to witchcraft trials but their conduct according to the rules of justice and the Protestant conscience. The first would preclude the abuses of zealots like Hopkins, and the second would remove the suspicions that turned ‘every poore and peevish olde Creature’ into a witch and every ‘bare Casuality, or accidental effect’ into a certain sign of her guilt.

Everywhere there were fears that innocent people were suffering in the courts. In their advice to magistrates, Protestant pastors repeatedly asked for the use of the regular legal procedures and questioned the role of rumour, the use of ordeals, and the application of torture. Innocent blood, warned the Stuttgart preacher Tobias Lotter, ‘screams daily to God, along with the blood of Abel, for revenge’.[42] In Nordtorf in Holstein, Samuel Meier argued for sure proofs and attacked the reckless use of torturc.[43] Ludwig Dunte felt he had to direct Lutheran consciences away from the analogy between prosecuting witches and warfare.[44] Gifford, likewise, was outspoken in his view that it was 'a very grievous thing ... to have a land polluted with innocent blood'.[45] Many expressed the opinion—which historians associate with serious scepticism about the witch trials—that it was better to let many guilty go free than convict one innocent defendant. It is also highly significant that these cautions were repeated by the greatest of the early Protestant legal experts on witchcraft, Johann Georg Godelmann, the third book of whose *Tractatus de magis, veneficis et larniis* (1591), dedicated to the duke of Mecklenburg, is marked by discrimination and restraint. He insisted that witchcraft be treated as an ordinary offence, not a *crimen exceptum,* he refused to admit as evidence confessions concerning impossibilities (including the sabbat), and he defended a rigorous separation between the perpetration of real harm (which he called *veneficium)* and the imaginary deeds of deluded women *(lamiae).* Like the pastors he lamented the readiness to accuse and punish; just as the Romans once clamoured for the blood of Christians with cries of 'To the lions', so now the populace shouted 'To the stake' whenever a woman was suspected of witchcraft.[46]

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[39] **Gijswijt-Hofstra, Witchcraft, 83; Gijswijt-Hofstra points also to the lack of interest among Dutch theologians in the type of witchcraft portrayed in the *Malleus malefcarum,* see esp. 79-80. For the cautions of the Dutch minister Willem Teellinck, see Stronks, ‘Significance of Balthasar Bckker’s Enchanted World’, 154.**

[40] **Gifford, *Dialogue,* sig. Dl^r; Bernard, *Guide logrand-jury men,* 8-9, see also 10,54,73-4.**

[41] **Gaulc, *Cases of conscience,* 4-5,7.**

[42] **Tobias Lotter, *Gründtlicher und* 7 *no‹hwendiger Berichl› von d‹n''' Was ungestummen Western, rerderbhehen Hageln undschadlichen Wasserflutten, mitwelchen TeutschlandansehrvielOrlen, indem 1613. Jahr emsthch heimgesueht warden, zuhaltenseyeited* (1615), by Midelfort, *Witch Hunting,* 46; cf. Hocker, *Der teufelselbs* fos cx.x'-cxxu- For Praetonus’s serious misgivings, sec Line Dresen-Coenders, ‘Antomus Pratonus , in Lehmann and Ulbncht (eds.), *K>m Unfug des Hexen-Processes,* 132-7**

Godelmann suggested a threefold distinction between those who made a demonic pact and committed real *maleficium,* those who made the pact without committing *maleficium,* and those whose 'crimes' were in fact impossibilities and self-delusions. Witches in the first category deserved death, those in the second, non-capital punishment, and those in the third, medical treatment.[47] Many Lutherans adopted this schema in the early part of the seventeenth century, including Theodor Thumm the Tübingen professor, Hermann Samson the Livonian superintendent-general, Johann Matthäus Meyfart the theologian at the Casimir *Gymnasium* at Coburg and then at Erfurt university, and the casuist Ludvig Dunte. By the 1680s Johann Osiander could speak of it as the general view of Lutheran theologians, who, he said, 'walk a middle path and make distinctions among witches'.[48] This *via media* enabled pastors opposed to popular intolerance to break down the assumption that witches were always responsible for actual harm done without giving up the principle that, with the devil's help, they might be. But it does show that they had come to accept the

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[41] Lohmeier, 'Die Hexenschrift des Samuel Meigerius', 52-3.

[44] Dunte, *Decisiones mille etsex casuum conscience,* 233; see also 775,780-1.

[45] Gifford, *Dialogue,* sig. H3'; cf. Gaule, *Cases of conscience,* 177.

[46] Godelmann, *Tractatus,* bk. 3, sig. A4', 1-7, 59-60. The German trans. of this work (1592) was undertaken by another pastor, the Hessian Superintendent, Georg Schwartz (Nigrinus). For a reappraisal of these aspects of the *Tractatus,* see Sbnkc Lorenz, 'Johann Georg Godelmann—Ein Gegner des Hexenwahns?' in Roderich Schmidt (ed.), *Beiträge zur pommerschen und mecklenburgischen Geschichte* (Marburg, 1981), 61-105.

[47] Godelmann, *Tractatus, bk.* 3,142-5.

[48] Cited Midelfort, *Witch Hunting,* 55, see also 50-5; cf.Thumm, *Tractatus theologicus,* 91-107, Samson, *Neun ... Hexen Predigt,* sigs. Xii'-Xiv'; Meyfart, *Hochwichtige Hexen-Erinnerung,* 61; Dunte, *Decisiones mille et sex casuum conscience,* 232-3. For the significance of this schema as an indicator of how much was retained of orthodox demonology despite the inroads made by Weyer, see above, Ch. 13.

jurists' principle that real *malejiciiini* was needed to justify the death penalty, and that the purely spiritual crime of pact-making could not.

It is, of course, the case that many of the reservations thus expressed were also (in part) the grounds for the altogether more thoroughgoing scepticism shown by Protestant authors like Weyer, Scot, and, later, Hermann Witckind, Thomas Ady, Mcyfart, and Balthasar Bekker, most of whom took the view that 'witches' could only commit the crimes that anyone might commit because their 'pact' was entirely spurious.[49] Most, however, did not need to go this far. Ady was expressing the general feeling, not some minority view, when he complained that the English were 'so infected with this damnable Heresie, of ascribing to the power of Witches, that seldom hath a man the hand of God against him in his estate, or health of body, or any way, but presently he cryeth out of some poor innocent Neighbour, that he, or she hath bewitched him'.[50] Clearly, there was an important strand of doubt in-built in Protestant demonology itself, stemming from its confrontation with what it saw as popular credulity and Manichaeism. If the prosecution of witches meant the neglect of those spiritual and moral truths regarding affliction that they derived from the Book of Job—and which ordinary people failed to grasp—then most Protestant pastors had grounds for opposing it.[51]

On the other hand, we should not exaggerate pastoral moderation; or, at least, we should not allow it to go unbalanced by a corresponding severity in areas where parishioners were felt to be lax or unconcerned.[52] Ady was made uncomfortable by his differences of view with Perkins, and thought that on the subject of witchcraft the eminent Protestant theologians Hemmingsen and Hyperius were no better than 'Popish Bloud-suckers'.[53] The general view in the texts was that there were plenty of real witches, who, even if they were utterly powerless, should still be punished—(as Brenz put it), 'because they are without fear of God, lead a godless and un-Christian life, give themselves entirely to the devil to corrupt and harm mankind, and not because they actually cause any harm, as they think they do; for they cannot harm'.[54]

[49] See, for example, Mej fart, *Hochwichtige Hexen-Erinnerung,* 56-67,186, stressing the bigotry of the clergy, as well as the popular readiness to bring accusations (at 134 and 172-80 Mcyfart does concede the principle that real witchcraft might be legally proved); on Bekker, sec Stronks, 'Significance of Balthasar Bekker's The Enchanted World', 150-1. The Catholic counterpart of the argument that the 'vulgar' peop!e were too.quick to blame innocent 'witches' for every unusual misfortune is seen in [Speel, *Cautio crimmalts,* 3-5,227,378-9.

[50] Ady, *Candle in the dark,* 114, sec also 130; cf. Gaule, *Cases of conscience 5*

\T^'T«ll'‘Witch'ra^nd^in ism''wasablet‘>^cthatinEngl'andCalvin'slegacywasuscd in quite different ways by Perkins, Gifford, and Scot.

[52] The double-sided nature of Protestant witchcraft beliefs is best whom supporters and *lung,* 155-82; id.,

[53] Ady, *Candle*

[54]

Their guilt was thus partly one of intention and mainly one of allegiance. Among the Württembcrg Lutherans, Brcnz himself, as well as Alber, Bidembach, Platz, Johann Georg Sigwart, and Lotter, all approved of the death penalty for witches.[51] * * * [55] So, on the same grounds, did the Zwinglian physician and theologian Thomas Erastus and the Lutheran casuist Fridrich Balduin.[56] Among Catholics with similar views, Plantsch neglected the punishment of witches but thought that, in principle, they deserved death. Molitor agreed, even though he stressed the powerlessness of witches and thought the sabbat was a complete delusion:

> although these accursed women cannot effectively do anything, yet they are apostates and follow heretical depravity, because, at the instigation of the devil, through desperation or poverty or hatred of neighbours or other temptations sent by the devil, which they do not resist, they abandon the true and most righteous God, by devoting themselves to the devil, revering him and offering him burnt-offerings and sacrifices.[57]

Later, other south-western German Catholics like Johann Zink, Reinhard Lutz, and Jodocus Lorichius took the same position as Brcnz.[58] In France the Celestine Pierre Crcspct insisted that even if witchcraft brought no harm but only benefits, the witch still deserved to be burned alive for treating with the devil, ‘because such a pact is incomparably more a capital offence than to kill people or animals by fire or sword, since that is done to creatures to whom one can make restitution whereas to deal with Satan is to fight directly against the majesty of God.’[59]

In England Gifford and other Elizabethan divines demanded greater not less severity in the laws. It was precisely because the 1563 statute dealt mainly with the actual harms wrought by witches that it missed the heinousness of their demonic allegiance, an omission only partly remedied by the legislation of 1603.[60] As with other issues of public morality, what the English reformers would have liked to achieve may be inferred backwards from what was said and done in the 1640s and 1650s. The divines of the Westminster Assembly glossed Exodus 22: 18 with this annotation: ‘Some have thought witches should not die unless they had taken away the life of mankind, but they are mistaken ... Though no hurt ensue in this contract at all, the witch deserves present and certain death for the contract itself.’[61] It is as though the English Calvinists were trying to match the Mediterranean inquisitors, for whom the spiritual crimes committed by witches, not their physical deeds, were uppermost in the attention of tribunals.[62] The early sixteenth-century Lombard inquisitor, Bernard de Como, for example, argued that even if the sabbat was an illusion, witches were still guilty of heresy in believing it to be true, in believing that they had renounced God while attending it, and in looking back on it with pleasure.[63] Similarly, Arnaldo Albcrtini, who was inquisitor in Sicily, thought that confessions of heresy by witches needed no other confirming testimony, as other criminal actions did, because ‘though in other crimes intention and will are not punishable without acts, yet this is not so in heresy or apostasy’. Here the crime was perpetrated ‘by the thought’, and this was enough. Albcrtini also said that although acts of *maleficium* were actually worked by demons, they were ‘to be attributed to the witches, who are to be most severely punished’.[64]

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[51] Midclfort, Jh7rA/fi/w/mf,38,39,41,44,45. For a convenient collection of Protestant views on the death penalty for witches, see Paulus, *Hexenwahn undHexenprozess.* 67-100.

* Erastus, *Deux Dialogues.* 409-17, see also 503-4; Dalduin, *Tractatus... casibusnimirumconscientiae.* 571. Cf. Benedict Carpzov, *Practicae novae imperials Saxonicae rerum criminalium.* 4th cdn. (Frankfurt/Mainand Wittenberg, 1658), pt. 1,318.

[17] Molitor, *Delamiisetphilonicis.* in *Malleus maleficarum* (1669 cdn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 1). 43-4; cf. [Kramer and Sprenger], *Malleus malefic arum.* 295. Further citations in Kieckhcfcr, furo/an *Witch Trials.* 85-6.

[51] Details in Midclfort, *Witch Hunting.* 35,58-61.

” Crcspct, *Deux Livres,* fos. 3 lO’-l 1'. The attitude of the secular judge, Henn Boguet, was the same; he wrote that ‘the witch has only the intent to harm* but ‘is as guilty as if he had himself committed the *deed': Examen of Witches. p.xVtV'*

[w] Holmes, ‘Popular Culture?’, 87; GilTord, *Dialogue,* sigs. K3'-K3'; Perkins, *Discourse,* 251-6.

“ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 441. On the 1603 statute, Thomas comments that its leniency ‘contrasted sharply’ with the views of the theologians, 442.

On this issue of powerlessness, Protestant pastors too could be intractable. Paulus Frisius wrote that even though witches could not actually effect any non-natural *maleficium* and relied on the devil to achieve this, yet ‘one takes the intention for the deed and action ... and punishes them as if they had themselves done it.’ In moderate England too we find Richard Bernard arguing that the devil’s actions could be imputed to witches, ‘and they may bee said to doe, what the spirits doe, though their own words and deedes have no force in themselves to effect their wills’.[65] In New England, likewise, Cotton Mather was to say that although witchcraft was ‘very much transacted upon the Stage of Imagination ... the buisines thus managed in Imagination yet may not be called Imaginary. The Effects are dreadfully reall.’[66] These look a little like attempts to win an argument both ways.

Above all, the pastors made up for any caution regarding malevolent witchcraft by their sustained and bitter attacks on its benevolent equivalent—popular magic. According to Brenz, those who practised counter-witchcraft were ‘worse than the infamous magicians and witches’, and ought to be punished no less severely.[67] Calvin himself extended the punishment of Exodus 22: 18 to the sins of Deuteronomy 18: 10—11, concluding that ‘God would condemn to capital punishment all augurs, and magicians, and consulters with familiar spirits, and necromancers and followers of magic arts, as well as enchanters.’ To ‘turn the sieve’ was more punishable by the magistrate than to murder *{escorcher)* a man, since it overturned the service of God

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[62] See below, n. 80.

[63] “ “ern ''d dc 11 Como- T^c,alu] & *'trigibus,* in *Malleus malejicarum* (1669 edn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 2). 119.

[64] Arnaldo Albcrtini, *Deagnoscendis assertionibus Catholicis et haerelicis tractatus,* 3rd edn. (Rome, 1572), first pub. 1553, cited by Lea, *Materials,* ii. 456,452.

[65] Frisius, *fondest TeuffelsNebelkappen,*223,*Bermrd, Guide to grand-jury men,* 159-60. It was said of the tnal for witchcraft of Margaret and Phillippa Flower in 1619 that‘though it were so, thatneither Witch nor Divillcoulddoc these things^yet Let nota IPi/rA/ive.sai th God,and Let rAetn</ye(sai th theJawofEngland): *Wonderfuldtscovene,* sig. G3r.

[66] Cotton Mather to John Richards, Boston, 31 May 1692 393.

[67] Brenz, *On Hailstorms,* 217. For Danish Lutheran opinion on ‘cunning’ men and women see Johansen, ‘Witchcraft, Sin and Repentance’, 419-20.

and perverted the natural order.[68] This was even the view of a non-clergyman like Sir Robert Filmer, who expressed hostility to conventional witchcraft belief—singling out the views of William Perkins, in particular—but who saw the ‘unlawfull Arts’ of Deuteronomy 18, as invitations to idolatry and their practitioners as ‘by many degrees more worthy of death, then those that only destroy the Bodies or Goods of Men’. What Filmer found so culpable was the *pretence* that witchcraft and magic had a real basis in the use of ‘familiar spirits’ or in pacts with devils; that they did have such a basis he rejected. He was thus prepared to punish mental crimes as severely as any clergyman.[69]

No clearer example exists of acculturation by text than this attempt to extend capital criminality to a set of social practices that the practitioners themselves, and their clients, deemed useful and desirable. And there is no blunter version of this after Calvin than the remarks with which Perkins himself concluded his *A discourse of the damned art of witchcraft.* Diviners, charmers, and wizards were ordinarily classed as ‘good’ witches, ‘which doe no hurt, but good, which doe not spoile and destroy, but save and deliver’. But, thundered Perkins:

> All these come under this sentence of Moses, because they deny God, and are confederates with Satan.... it were a thousand times better for the land, if all Witches, but specially the blessing Witch might suffer death.... Death therefore is the just and deserved portion of the good Witch.[70]

There are some further notable examples of this opinion in the religious literature that issued from the most important centre of Calvinism in Hungary, Debrecen. Bishop Péter Méliusz, who, like Weyer, rejected the physical pact and the sabbat, nevertheless asked for the death penalty for experts in ‘white’ magic. Another bishop, Mátyás Nógrádi, who was probably influenced by Perkins, took the same view, though he accepted the usual demonic pact as a possibility. Irrespective of their differences over the reality of ‘black’ witchcraft, these Hungarian Calvinists took up a uniformly hostile position concerning its supposedly benevolent equivalent.[71]

Many Protestants contrasted the severity shown towards malevolent witches with the laxity towards blessers, conjurors, and fortune-tellers. ‘Seeing we have been too fierce against supposed Malefick Witchcraft,’ was John Hale’s verdict on the Salem witch trials, ‘let us take heed we do not on the contrary become too favourable to divining Witchcraft.'[72] The feeling was that either this situation should be reversed, or the two groups should be treated alike, for what mattered, again, was not the harming or helping they achieved but the committing of a serious religious offence. At the very least, they shared equally in this sin; but very likely, the second were worse than the first.[73] The view was not unanimous but there were enough who thought like Perkins to suggest that Protestant demonology often had the fiercely repressive tone of authentic acculturation.

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[68] Calvin, *Commentaries,* ii. 90; id., ‘Sermon eix sur le Deuteronomy’, col. 513; and for a follower, Daneau, *Dialogue,* sig. Kiii^r.

[69] [Filmer], *Advertisement,* 16.

[70] Perkins, *Discourse,* 255-6; cf. the remark of Pickering, in his dedicatory epistle to this ‘ott. that the ‘good’ witch was ‘even the better Witch of the two’. Cf. the sceptical Ady, *Candle in the dark* 169, who noted that the real witches were ‘such as silly people call cunning men, who will undertake to tell them who hath bewitched them’. For commentary on Perkins’s ‘obsession’ with beneficent witchcraft in the context of a ‘larger intellectual program[me]’, together with his lack of success in [illegible] Leland L. Estes, ‘Good Witches, Wise Men, Astrologers, and Scientists: William Perkins and the Limits of the European Witch-Hunts’, in Merkel and Debus (eds.), [illegible], 159-65.

[71] Kristof, ‘Calvinist Demonology’; id., ‘ “Wise Women”, Sinners and the Poor’, 101-2, 107.

This is confirmed by the striking claim, also made by many of the leading authorities, that the *clients* of professional magic were guilty of the same sin as its practitioners and, by implication at least, deserved the same punishment.[74] The injunctions in Leviticus 19:31 and 20:6 spoke of those who sought out wizards and warned that they would be 'cut off', a phrase often taken literally. James Mason and Abraham Scultetus implied that it meant the death penalty for clients; Niels Hemmingsen, Thomas Erastus, and Henry Holland said so openly. Citing Romans 1: 32 (on the capital sins of those who connived with evildoers), Hemmingsen wrote that 'eiusdem impietatis reus peragitur, et eiusdem poenis obnoxius est apud Deum, et qui artem exercet magicam, et qui ex ea remedium petit.'[75] If, as was said by Alber and Bidembach, to consult soothsayers, exorcists *(teuffelsbeschwörenі),* and crystal-ball gazers was as much an apostasy as witchcraft itself, it was hard to avoid the same conclusion.[76] Bernard wanted the churchwardens of the diocese of Wells to present both 'white' witches and those who consulted them to the church courts. This would not, of course, have led to the same level of punishment as that inflicted in the English secular courts; there was no clerically inspired 'witch hunt' in early modern England.[77] Nevertheless, the penalty incurred by the most famous client of all—King Saul—provided the fundamentalists with a standard. And even a sceptic like Ady could be severe on those who consulted witches, if only on the grounds that they became the victims of deceit.[78]

These demands for drastic measures were not translated directly into tough legislative or judicial action; they remained textual. All over Europe, church courts and tribunals took measures to deal with 'white' witchcraft but rarely with a severity that matched the language of the pastors and priests.[79] The Inquisition, it has now become dear, instead of following through its theological commitment to the demonic and, thus, apostatical character of all forms of magic and superstition, treated these rather as threats to the Church's monopoly of sacred power and as perversions of its rituals. This was accompanied by scepticism regarding ritual devil-worship, and the adoption of procedural measures to safeguard those accused of *maleficium.* Accordingly, many of the cases that came before its regional tribunals were seen as opportunities for redemptive, not retributive justice.[80] Nevertheless, there are some indications that a significant proportion of those who appeared as defendants in early modern witchcraft trials were practitioners of 'white' magic precisely those healers, diviners, and blessers (though not, it seems, midwives) who feature so prominently in the demonologies.[81] It may be true that this was partly the result of their already ambiguous position within their own communities, but pastoral hostility must surely have been at work. Did reformation Europe turn on its countryside magicians as it became clear that the first phase of evangelism had not removed the need to consult them and that men and women were returning to their 'superstitions' (as Hemmingsen sourly put it, echoing St Augustine) like dogs returning to their old vomit?[82] A great deal more will have to be discovered about this aspect of witchcraft trials before we can be sure about the manner in which acculturation by text influenced the world beyond its pages.

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[72] Hale, *Modest enquiry*, 431.

” e.g. Bernard, *Guide to grand-jury men,* sigs. A5'-A6, pp. 249-58; for Bernard, typical 'witches' included astrologers, d.viners figure-casters, charmers, and 'observers of times', see 91-2. Cf. Scultetus, *Warnungjurder Ivarsagerey,* 30, see also 7-8.

[74] See above, Ch. 31.

, ”1 HcmTMings?n' '4JTMn,l,0> S'B- 02'; cf. Erastus, *Deux Dialogues,* 504; Holland, Trea/ire, sig. G2', who translated Hemmingsen's remark as:'he which practiscth witchcraft, » ® » both alike guiltie of the same impietie, and before God subject to'
Anatomie ofsorcerie, 92-5; Scultetus, *Warnung,* 7-9; Platz, *Kurtzer*

[74] Alber and Bidembach, *Summa etlicher*

[77] Bernard, *Guide*

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of John Walsh ... touchyng wytchcrafte and sorcerye (London, 1566). The role of the Dutch Reformed church councils in attacking 'white' witchcraft is discussed by Marijke Gijswijt-Hoftstra, 'Witchcraft before Zeeland Magistrates and Church Councils Sixteenth to Twentieth Centuries', in Gijswijt-Hofstra and Frijhoff (eds.), *Witchcraft in the Netherlands,* 103-18.

[80] Bartolome Bennassar *et al., L'Inquisition espagnole* xv*-xix* siècle (Paris, 1979), 229-39; Mary O'Neil, 'Magical Healing, Love Magic and the Inquisition in Late Sixteenth-Century Modena', in Stephen Haliczer (ed.), *Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1986), 88-114; Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice, 1550-1650 (Oxford, 1989),passim,* stressing the influence on the Venetian inquisitors of Nicolas Eymerich's *Directorium inquisitorum* (1376), in the 16th-c. edition by the Spanish canon lawyer Francisco Peña; Monter, *Frontiers of Heresy,* 255-75; Stephen Haliczer, *Inquisition and Society in the Kingdom of Valencia, 1478-1834 (Oxford,* 1990), 312-20; John Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy: Collected Studies on the Inquisition in Early Modern Italy* (Binghamton, NY, 1991), 8, 10-11, 127-203,205-27,229-58; Nalle, *God in La Mancha,* 180-1.

[81] Individual examples, like those of Ursula Kemp, who said that 'though she could unwitch, she could not witch' *(A true andjust recorde, of... all the witches, taken at S. Oses, in the countie of Essex* (London, 1582), sig. A2), or Joan Peterson, whose clients came to her trial to give evidence of her cures *(The witch of tapping* (London, 1652), 3), are found in cases from all over Europe. For general treatments of the subject, see Richard Horsley, 'Who Were the Witches? The Social Roles of the Accused in the European Witch Trials', *J. Interdisciplinary Hist.* 9 (1979), 689-715; id., 'Further Reflections on Witchcraft and European Folk Religion', *Hist. Religions,* 19 (1979), 71-95; Clarke Garrett, 'Witches and Cunning Folk in the Old Regime', 53-64; Tekla Dömötör, 'The Cunning Folk in English and Hungarian Witch Trials', in Venetia Newall (ed.), *Folklore Studies in the Twentieth Century* (Woodbridge, 1980), 183-7, Hans Eyvind Naess, 'Norway: The Criminological Context in Ankarloo and Henningsen (eds.), *Early Modern European Witchcraft*, 372–5; Willem de Blécourt, 'Cunning Women, from Healers to Fortune Tellers', in Binneveld and Dekker (eds.), *Curing and Insuring*, 43–55; id., 'Witch Doctors, Soothsayers and Priests: On Cunning Folk in European Historiography and Tradition', *Social Hist.* 19 (1994), 285–303. The case of midwives is dealt with (for England) by David Harley, 'Historians as Demonologists: The Myth of the Midwife-Witch', *Social Hist. Medicine,* 3 (1990), 1–26.

[82] Hemmingsen, *Admonitio,* sig. F2r.

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Protestant Witchcraft, Catholic Witchcraft

> Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.
>
> (John 9:16)

> Both those of the reformed Churches, as well as these of the Roman in a manner, agree in their Definiton of the sinne of Witch-craft.
>
> ([Robert Filmer], *Advertisement)*

IN 1584 Reginald Scot claimed that only the Catholic Church took the subject of witchcraft seriously; it was, he said, ‘incomprehensible to the wise, learned or faithfull; a probable matter to children, fooles, melancholike persons and papists’. In effect, ‘witchmongers’ and ‘massmongers’ were one and the same thing, whereas the religion of the gospel could stand ‘without such peevish trumperie’. All the same, he was obliged to acknowledge the demonologies of leading Protestant theologians like Daneau and Hemmingsen, and he deplored the way in which the ordinary English clergy' lent credibility to popular witchcraft beliefs by recognizing the existence of healers and conjurors in their parishes and making allegations against local witches.[1] In 1653, after nearly seventy more years of active Protestant publishing on the subject, another English sceptic, Sir Robert Filmer, was in no doubt about the essential consensus across denominational lines.[2] This shift of emphasis has been mirrored in modern times. Like Scot, Georg Längin and Wilhelm Gottlieb Soldan (anti-Catholic) and Johann Diefenbach and Nikolaus Paulus (anti-Protestant) blamed the witch trials on their religious opponents.[3] In the more recent past, historians have tended to concur with Filmer. Trevor-Roper argued that the evangelists of all the major churches were equally involved, both at the level of actual prosecutions and in the elaboration of theory, a view in which he has been followed by Jean Delumeau.[4]

But in any case, these questions are now seen to rest on outmoded assumptions. It no longer seems appropriate to apportion responsibility, if this is to have moralistic

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2 and Biv^{f}, see also sig. Bii* and 4-6.

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overtones. The very idea of drawing broad confessional correlations across the history of witchcraft has been overtaken by enquiries into local patterns of witchcraft prosecution. It has become clear that the incidence and severity of the campaigns actually mounted against witches depended on a complex interplay of social, institutional, and ideological circumstances, which could cut across religious affiliations. Striking regional differences have emerged in the witch trial profiles of Calvinist and Catholic Europe. The Scottish and Dutch experiences were at opposite ends of the spectrum of severity, while Mediterranean and northern Catholic reactions to witchcraft were also strongly divergent.[5]

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What difference, then, did confessional disagreements make to witchcraft beliefs? Was early modern demonology, whatever the faiths of its authors, simply the uniform expression of a new form of social control—what Christina Larner called 'Christian political ideology'? These are questions that can hardly be evaded altogether, even if it has been best to evade them so far. But if we look again at the fundamental ingredients of demonology' already surveyed in this book, there does seem to be little to distinguish the Protestant from the Catholic formulations. The thought-patterns and linguistic habits that governed representations of witchcraft stemmed from cosmological traditions, communication theories, and evaluative strategies that transcended religious difference. That difference, with all its bitter irreconcilability, vastly exaggerated the tendency to polarize and dichotomize, but this tendency was not in itself peculiar to any of the major religions. Concerning the causal mechanics of demonism—the limitations on the powers of devils to effect changes in the natural world and their consequent resort to illusion—there was total agreement between the faiths, grounded on a shared intellectual indebtedness to Augustine and Aquinas. On the general causation of witchcraft phenomena, Zanchy, Casmann, and Petrus Martyr spoke with the same voice as Torreblanca, Binsfeld, or Del Rio. The eschatological view that witchcraft flourished because the world was in a state of terminal decline was, likewise, as common among French Catholic authors such as Michaelis, Nodé, and Le Normant, as among the writers of Lutheran Germany and Calvinist England—in this case reflecting the popularity of apocalyptic history in both major Reformations. And when (as we shall see in Part V) the proper judicial response to witchcraft was debated, Protestant and Catholic authors were alike prompt to call down the authority of the secular magistrate and to defend it with a mixture of Old Testament precedents, Pauline political theory, and (what Max Weber would later call) 'charismatic legitimation'. On none of these matters was there a characteristically 'Protestant' or 'Catholic' view, a fact amply illustrated by the frequency with which the demonological authorities of one religion were cited by the exegetes of the other. What were important, as John Teall once perceptively noted, were not 'specific confessional peculiarities but problems general to the period'.[6]

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[5] Monter, *Ritual, Myth and Magic, passim,* esp. 43-97.

[6] Teall, 'Witchcraft and Calvinism', 22, see also 34.

Even when we arrive at religion itself there seems paradoxically little evidence of strong theological or pastoral preferences.[7] The tendencies in ‘Augustinian Europe’[8] that turned *malejicium* into a case of conscience, made ‘witches’ of the churches’ competitors, and cast ‘superstition’ as religion’s greatest obstacle worked their intellectual effects irrespective of clerical allegiance. According to Jean Delumeau, the ‘Council Fathers and, later, the hierarchy (even the non-Jansenists), the internal missionaries, and the new seminary-trained clergy, all used fundamentally the same language in their encounters with “superstition” as did the Protestant pastors and theologians.” Wading through Lorichius’s catalogues of superstitions, for example, it is difficult not to classify him as a Tridcntine ‘puritan’, so keen was he to remove every ounce of unauthorized ritual from Catholic behaviour. In his hands, ‘superstition’ extended from not using one’s left hand or not spinning on Saturdays to figured music and decorative painting. There were, however, differences of scope and accent. For what, after all, counted as authority? Historians have long recognized that it is not a ‘Protestant’ judgement to say that Catholic reformers could not de-ritualize conduct to the same extent as their rivals. Lorichius was as anxious as any to say that no time, place, person, number, gesture (or whatever) was intrinsically more significant than any other. Yet, like any Catholic, he invested more in extrinsic significance than Lutherans and, especially, Calvinists did. The Roman Church had to spend more time making distinctions between the use and abuse of its practices than others did, as the pages dedicated by Lorichius to Catholic superstitions testify.[10]

For their part, Protestants simply did not have some of the doctrinal commitments that, like the belief in purgatory and the invocation of saints, gave ancillary encouragement to spirit activity.[11] While allowing that there was no essentially Protestant doctrine of witchcraft, William Monter has also suggested that nearly all Protestant writers on the subject ‘insisted on a few common elements’, above all, the extent of divine power and providence.[12] Larner, too, while arguing that ‘the different types of theological position prevalent in seventeenth-century Scotland are less important than the introduction of Christianity itself’, provides for a theological emphasis on God’s rewarding of sin with earthly punishments.[13] If it is not the case that Protestant authors dealt with themes that found no place in the Catholic literature, they nevertheless seem to have dealt with them to the neglect or exclusion of other elements in witchcraft beliefs, notably those concerning the sabbat and the other sensational aspects of demonism like metamorphosis and sexuality. As Teall again remarked, without either canon law or scholastic theology Protestants’ views about witchcraft ‘rested on narrower foundations’ than did those of the Catholics.[14] This preoccupation may be traced partly to the characteristic stresses in Protestant theology already noted, particularly 'thcoccntricity' and anthropological pessimism.[15] Covenant theory, likewise, gave extra inversionary meaning to the demonic pact, especially in its implicit form. Protestant biblicism provided little or no help on the subject of sabbats, but its influence over interpretations of witchcraft as a spiritual and moral problem could be total. Besides, the sabbat, with its pronounced anti-ritualism, was of much greater significance to Catholics. But probably the most important reason was that the typical Protestant author was more likely to be involved first-hand in clerical practice—indeed, he was usually a pastor with a flock, rather than an academic theologian with a student audience—and, therefore, more interested in the evangelical and homiletic aspects of witchcraft, than the theoretical and intellectual.[16]

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[7] But see the argument that Protestantism led to greater misogyny and, thus, to greater fears concerning witchcraft, in Coudert, ‘Myth of the Improved Status of Protestant Women’ 69-88

[8] The label is Wright’s in his *Counter-Reformation*, 40

[9] Jean Delumeau, ‘Prescription and Reality’, in Leites (ed.), *Conscience and Casuistry*, 145.

[10] Lorichius, *Aberglaub*, 30–2, 43–93.

[11] Bekker, *World bewitch'd*, 220,238-9.'

[12] Monter, *Ritual, Myth and Magic*, 31.

[13] Larner, *Enemies of God*, 201.

[14] Teall,‘Witchcraft and Calvinism*, 28-9.

These qualifications apart, it remains difficult—with one important exception—to trace in demonology any serious repercussions of the doctrinally most divisive issues of the reform era—*sola scriptlira, sola fide,* and so on. That the things that defined witchcraft for clerics were the things they largely agreed on is borne out by its universal placement in the Decalogue as a sin against the first Commandment. How to relate Old Testament and gospel, works and faith, sinning and salvation, could not have been more controversial; but that the Law was an indispensable element in such calculations was presupposed by all. However theology coped with it, and wherever it was placed in the catechism, it provided the essential benchmarks of human depravity. Although, too, the circumstances in which the individual sin of idolatry occurred might be hotly contested—above all, in connection with images—idolatry itself was a transgression that no Christian could do without. The aspects of doctrine and worship that underpinned it, notably the stress on a providential divinity who required total and undivided loyalty, were incontestable and, thus, shared. Elaborations of the first Commandment in Protestant and Catholic catechisms dealt, accordingly, with the same arguments, while those matters that did divide catechists on denominational lines did not—if the case of the Trent catechism and the evidence from France are typical—impinge on their understanding of witchcraft.[17]

It therefore looks very much as though the history of demonology conforms to what reinterpreters of early modem religious change have, in the wake of Delumeau, been telling us—that the two major Reformations had so much in common that their similarities arc more significant than their differences. Delumeau's own celebrated proposal was that, despite their doctrinal and liturgical rivalries, Protestants and Catholics were jointly attempting to 'Christianize' the average Westerner.[18] In his own judgements about the state of the average Westerner’s religion before the reformers got hold of it, as well as their success or failure when they did, Delumeau was vulnerable to criticism. But there is scarcely any doubt that ‘Christianizing’ was what reformers of all the major churches *thought* they were doing, and that what they meant by this was, in part, the spiritualization of misfortune, the abolition of magic, and the discrediting and eradication of a wide range of popular cultural forms as ‘superstitions’. Seen in this light, demonology comes to have a crucial bearing on the impetus to reform, while evangelism makes better sense of clerical hostility to witchcraft. What was reflected in many witchcraft prosecutions, it has been claimed, was not so much the differences between the religions involved (or any inter-sectarian strife) as their common missionary determination to impose the fundamentals of Christian belief and practice on ordinary people. This is a principle that has been put to work in the cases of Calvinist Scotland, the Catholic Netherlands and north-east of France, the duchy of Luxembourg, Hungary, and the areas covered by the Mediterranean Inquisitions. It also applies well to the circumstances of the witch trials in the Catholic ecclesiastical territories of Bamberg and Wurzburg.”

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[15] The terms arc those of Alister McGrath, *The Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation* (Oxford, 1987), 51,65,118,199.

[16] I summarize here my own findings in 'Protestant Demonology: Sin, Superstition, and Society (*c.* 1520-*c.* 1630)', in Ankarloo and Hcnningsen (eds.), *Early Modem European Witchcraft,* 45-81.

[17] Dhotcl, *Origines du catechisme modeme,* 204-26. For the doctrinal differences in the Decalogue teaching of the Trent catechism, see Gerhard Bellinger, *Der Catechismus Romanus und die Reformation: Die katechetische Antwort des Trienter Konzils aufdie Haupt-Katechismen der Reformatory* (Paderborn, 1970), 66—9,233—45.

[18] Delumeau, *Catholicism,* 161; id., *Naissanceet affirmation de la Reforme,* 5th edn.(Pans, 1988), 351-77,

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The one exception to this all-party consensus lay in the area of remedies against witchcraft and against demonism in general. If ordinary people, fearing bewitchment, were not to counteract it by resorting to ‘magic’ and ‘superstition’, or rely solely on the lawcourts, how should they respond? Writers of all denominations agreed that they should appeal to the spiritual and moral protections of the Church (as well as to allowable medicine) and often concluded their discussions by listing the permissible alternatives and giving advice. But there could be little agreement across the churches about what specific remedies to list, given that Lutherans and Calvinists had removed entire areas of the traditional therapeutic repertoire. A Jesuit like Maldonado could offer these typical ‘ecclesiastical’ protections: exorcism, the name of Christ, the sign of the cross, saints’ relics, reciting the Creed, fasting and prayer, the eucharist, holy water, and the word of God.[20] The full armoury would also have included other sacramentals (for example, palms, the Agnus Dei).[21] But by then, patently, no Protestant could possibly expect to ward off *maleficium* with relics or holy water, and Catholics too had to pay attention to their correct (i.e. Tridentine) significance when using them. The remedies against demons and witchcraft were the same as the responses to any spiritual threat or physical misfortune, but these

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id., •Prescription and Reality’, 134-58; cf. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,153*, 499 fT on common aims and ideas.

” Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat, ‘La Repression de la sorcellerie dans le duche de xvf ct xvn* siecles\ in

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changed in nature and number according to which church was recommending them.

This would seem too obvious a point to make, if it were not for the great importance of what was on offer to the central debates of reformation history. This was so highly contentious an area because it lay at the very heart of what divided the faiths. Any witchcraft writer who prescribed an 'ecclesiastical' remedy involved himself necessarily in this wider polemic at least tacitly, and many took the opportunity to make a vigorous contribution to it. Thus discussions of the purely spiritual remedies offered by Protestantism not only defended the efficacy of faith, the Word, prayer, fasting, and vigils; they very often turned into denunciations of Catholic 'idolatry' and 'superstition'.[22] Demonology was, at once, both a consumer of religious prescriptions and a contributor to their elaboration and refinement. Its authors took their opportunity to rehearse the churches' most effective therapies, all the while yielding up potentially decisive information about whether they worked against devils.[23] Here is another example, then, of demonology's total integration with the intellectual preoccupations of the age.

From 1564 onwards pronouncements in this area were naturally influenced by the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent.[24] Benoist's advice for avoiding the effects of sorcery and demonism was clearly inspired by its measures for parochial discipline; he said one should attend mass on Sundays and feast days in the local church, not elsewhere, and hear the full version, not the low mass or one heard privately.[25] A typical post-Trent specialist was Bishop Forner of Bamberg, who devoted twenty-two of his thirty-five witchcraft sermons to the pieces of spiritual armour that would protect Catholics from the devil's assaults. All seven sacraments are there (if we subsume asking priests for help under Ordination), plus some of the Church's sacramentals—benedictions (of holy water, salt, wine, oil, bells, etc.), exorcisms, and so on. Excluding those that Protestants too would have accepted, such as faith, trust in God, fasting and prayer, and renunciation of the devil, Forner also offered devout invocation of the names of Christ and the Virgin, the protection of a guardian angel, saints and their relics, the sign of the cross, and the use of Agni Dei and amulets made of the scriptures. The items were virtually the same (but there were only five of the sacraments) in the second of Crespct's *Deux Livres,* where he considered ways to resist the devil's 'interior' assaults. Both authors were, in effect, writing essays in orthodox Counter-Reformation spirituality.[26] For the most part they cite supporting testimonies and episodes from the history of each vehicle of grace or aid to piety. But they were also fashioning propaganda against the Church's enemies—heretics who denied the validity of its rites but whose own versions were powerless against devils.

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[n] See, for example, Perrault, *Demonologie.* 212-33.

[21] For witchcraft cases cited in defence of the efficacy of Catholic sacramentals, see Jacob Gretser, *Libriduo de benedictionibus, el tertius de maledictionibus* (Ingolstadt, 1615), 132-5,230-1.

[24] For the situation in Catholic demonology before Trent, see [Krämer and Sprenger], *Malleus maleficarum,* 334-408; Geiler, *Die emeis.* fos. xlviiiMiiii'; Plantsch, *Opusculum de sagis maleficis.* sigs, ev'-gii'.

« Benoist, *Trois Sermons de S. Augustin.* 'Que tous Chrestiens sont tenus les jours des Dimenches ct festes d'assisler a leurs Messes parochiales*.

[u] Other examples in Tanner, *Tractatustheologicus.ll-liGuizzo. Compendium maleficarum.* 177-206.

The evidence regarding the sign of the cross, for example, was sufficient, in Forner’s eyes, ‘to refute the unbelieving Calvinists, enemies of the truth’; the power of the eucharist in cases of demonic possession had already won over many of them.[27] According to the highly partisan demonology of Crespet, ‘all the heresies, atheisms, enchantments, scandals, and vices that reign in France arise from nowhere else than the scorn that is shown for the Holy Sacrament and for the victorious Cross.’[28]

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The case of remedies apart, the dominance of demonology by Decalogue theology meant that serious confessional divergence was only able to arise when idolatry—in the form of witchcraft, magic, or superstition—was detected in the beliefs or observances of a religious competitor. Agreeing, for the most part, on what witchcraft *was,* Protestants and Catholics were still free to identify it in each other’s church—indeed, not only free but desperately eager. This is another feature of early modern religious life that might seem almost too obvious to deserve record. Without doubt, much of what was said was sloganizing and name-calling, but it was so widespread, so endemic in the discourse of religious difference, that it must be seen as constitutive of what opponents thought of each other, and not merely a decorative addition. However unthinking and repetitive, the surface of polemical invective usually reveals deeper meanings. Calling each other ‘witches’ helped religious enemies just to vent their anger and hatred but it also identified what it was that was so offensive about enemy faiths, as well as evoking the sense of an unbridgeable distance between them. To *be* a Protestant or a Catholic was thus, in part, to have precisely this view of one’s foes.

In this sense, the greater currency given to conceptions of witchcraft by contemporary prosecutions for the crime undoubtedly influenced both the character and the intensity of confessionalization. Influences in the other direction are more elusive. Historians of the witch trials have found it difficult to substantiate Trevor-Roper’s assertion that they resulted directly from mutual accusations of witchcraft between Protestant and Catholic communities, usually in situations of conflict and crusade. To the extent that accusations and prosecutions reflected reforming zeal, this may well have been the zeal (discussed in my last chapter) to eradicate what was seen as lay-people’s irreligion, rather than the errors of other Christians. It will be clear from what has gone before that the texts, at least, paid a great deal of attention to this sort of reformation, and less to straightforward interconfessional denunciation. On the other hand, acculturation also appealed precisely because true churches naturally wanted all the recruits they could win over. The obstacles to the godly society—the very need for it—could be blamed on false churches and the demons they served. Recalcitrant individuals who failed to respond could thus be demonized as ‘witches’ not because of any strict confessional allegiance but through a looser association of errors.[2’]

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[27] Fomcr, *Panoplia armaturae Dei,* 254,172-3.

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Even so, there were countless depictions by adherents of each major faith of the ‘witchcraft’ inherent in the other, and these were reflected in demonological writings. Protestant propaganda to this effect in England is familiar from Keith Thomas's *Religion and the Decline of Magic* and the historian of its Continental equivalents need only extrapolate from his findings. Religious reformers from the Lollards onwards asserted that Catholicism was inherently magical since many of its rituals relied on securing material effects from non-material causes—blessings, exorcisms, hallowings, and the like. These were attempts to endow physical things with powers beyond their natural capacities and, since they were spurious in this way, they fell into the category of tacitly demonic operations. All the church’s *sacramentalia* were obviously vulnerable to such an attack, but so too was transubstantiation itself, which in many denunciations became a ‘conjuration’ and an ‘enchantment’. Catholic priests were no better than magicians, sorcerers, and witches, it was repeatedly said. In this spirit, the liturgy of the reformed church in England was purged of its ‘superstitious’ and ‘magical’ elements, though never with sufficient rigour to prevent further attacks from ever more radical critics. ‘By the end of the sixteenth century,’ writes Thomas, ‘there was substantial acceptance for the extreme Protestant view that no mere ceremony could have any material efficacy, and that divine grace could not be conjured or coerced by any human formula.’[30]

English witchcraft authors plainly shared these views and, since many of them were of ‘puritan’ persuasion they tended to express them forthrightly. Henry Holland (citing Hemmingsen) compared Catholic to ‘heathen’ magic, saint-worship to devil-worship, and the sign of the cross to witchcraft by ‘characters’. For him, the ‘witches’ of Rome were ‘more wicked then the Heathen Witches, for these abuse the Worde and Sacramentes of God’.[31] Thomas Pickering introduced the 1610 edition of Perkins’s *Discourse* by pointing out that the miracles associated with saints and their relics were ‘but meere Satanicall wonders’, while Perkins himself said they were ‘Satanicall impostures’ wrought by sensory delusion, that Catholic exorcisms were ‘meere inchantements’, and that the sign of the cross ‘carrieth the very’ nature of a Charme, and the use of it in this manner, a practise of Inchantment’.[32] For Bernard, it was natural that among people most likely to blame witches for misfortune were the ‘popishly affected’ and among those most likely to become witches were the ‘superstitious and idolatrous, as all Papists be’; after all, sorcery was ‘the practice of that Whore, the Romish Synagogue’, and devils could be relied on to teach popery during exorcisms.[33] Later, John Gaule repeated again the view that witches were more common in societies with ‘superstitious’ religions, notably Catholicism.[34] This was one of the refrains of English witchcraft theory, underlined by the universal association of Catholicism with the Antichrist, and by the conviction that the strengths of the true religion and of magic varied in inverse proportion. All would have agreed with the Welshman Charles Edwards, who remarked that since the faith was repaired even the fairies (which he took to be familiar demons) were not so bold as they had been in the time of the Papacy: ‘It is a sign of the dawn of evangelical day’, he wrote, ‘when the insects of darkness went into hiding.’[35]

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[30] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 51-77 (my quotation at 57) gives many illustrations.

[31] Holland, *Treatise*, sig. El^{r}, see also BP~*.

[32] Perkins, *Discourse*, ‘Epistle Dedicatoric*, 25-6,150, 152.

[33] Bernard, *Guide to grand-jury men*, 73-4,95-7.

[34] Gaule, *Cases of conscience*, 16-17.

Continental parallels (indeed, sources) for these Protestant attributions of witchcraft to Catholicism are likewise abundant. The Tübingen theologian Heerbrand, for example, called Catholic rituals ‘nothing but truly diabolical, ungodly, and magical blasphemies’.[36] Ellinger likened Catholic baptism to demonic magic, both of them relying spuriously on an intrinsic power in words, and the same objection could obviously be brought against the text of the mass.[37] In Denmark, Hemmingsen wrote of the supplanting of the ‘diabolical impostures’ of Rome by the true faith and of the devil transfering his attention to countryside magicians instead.[38] It was widely alleged that several medieval Popes had practised magic and that the Jesuits were likewise magicians and witches. The assumption that the Pope was the Antichrist also cemented Catholicism’s connection with the black arts. That it was the quintessence of superstition was a view so general to Protestant cultures that it ranks as the merest of commonplaces in the history of early modern religion. But it helped witchcraft authors too to explain away the centuries of darkness and error and to defend the need for radical change. Equally prevalent, of course, was the association of superstition with demonism.

In essence, therefore, the Protestant accusation that Catholicism was a religion based on witchcraft arose from questioning the sense in which specific religious rituals could be said to be efficacious. Catholics returned the accusation but not by raising the same questions about the rituals of their enemies. Instead, they took a long view of the church militant and argued that, from the example of Simon Magus onwards, heresy had always been intimately associated with magic. Theirs was an argument based on a simple dualism between God’s true church and the devil’s false versions, backed up by a reading of history. That the medieval Church did indeed link heresy with demonism, that heretics were accused of crimes with close similarities to witchcraft, and that the first ‘new’ witches of the fourteenth century were assimilated to the ‘old’ heretics of the twelfth and thirteenth, are all commonplaces of modern scholarship and there is no need to rehearse them again here. The main point is that, for the Catholic controversialists of the post-Lutheran era, Protestant ‘witches’ were only the latest in a long series of demonic threats to the faith. It seemed, moreover, that the things that Protestants denied in Catholicism were precisely the things that were rejected, parodied, ridiculed, or otherwise subverted by witches—the Virgin,

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[”] Charles Edwards, *Hanes y Ffydd Ddijfuant (History of the Unfeigned Faith),* facs. of 3rd edn. of 1677, ed. G. J. Williams (Cardiff, 1936), 238 (trans, kindly provided by Prys Morgan). For the associations between the Antichrist and magic and witchcraft, see Ch. 23 above.

[M] Heerbrand, *De magia,* 13-15, quotation at 15; other examples from the German south-west in Midlefort, *Witch Hunting,* 63.

[17] Ellinger, *Hexen Coppel,* 6-1UjScultetus, *Warnung,* 13-14(on‘Hocestmeumcorpus’).

[11] Hemmingsen, *Admonitio,* sigs. Fl *-F3'.

the saints, the sign of the cross, and so on.[39] This was yet further evidence of the closeness of their alliance and not, as we might read it, of the working out of a particular representational and symbolic pattern.

A classic example of this polemic was the oration 'Cur magia pariter cum haercsi hodic crevcrit' given at a graduation ceremony at Louvain on 30 August 1594 by the English professor of theology, Thomas Stapleton. Deploring the practice of witchcraft in every part of Europe, Stapleton argued that this was a natural accompaniment to the equal spread of heresy, given the intimate links between the two. They had the same demonic origins, of course, but were also inspired by the same motives, notably 'carnal desire', hatred of authority, and curiosity, and they appealed to the same kinds of dissidents and waverers. The true faith was denied in both cases, at first in small matters, but eventually in essentials, leading to the systematic flouting of all the Church's laws and ceremonies.[40] Moreover, heresy and magic were intrinsically connected:

> just as the wonderful effects of the magic art cannot themselves be attributed either to the magicians' own intelligence or to the artefacts they use, such as figures, images, and incantations, but are produced by a different intelligence, by the devil himself, and only he does everything... so today the leading astray of the people by heretics does not happen because of the learning, eloquence, cunning, or wickedness of the heretics themselves, but through that same Satan whose servants they are and who works through them.

Magicians and witches, like heretics, were deceptive and difficult to discern, their threat to orthodoxy not always being acknowledged. They were betrayed by their use of superfluous, 'ceremonial' efficacies (magic) or by superfluous and novel doctrines (heretics).[41]

Five years after Stapleton, Del Rio opened the first Louvain edition of his massive demonology with an equally trenchant version, borrowed from another Jesuit, whose lectures he had attended in Paris, Juan Maldonado. Magic and heresy had been inseparable since Simon Magus, and the Hussite, Waldensian, and Lutheran movements had each seen an increase in witchcraft. According to Del Rio, most of those who had recently confessed to the crime in Trier had admitted to being 'infected' by demonism as a result of the spread of Lutheranism. England, Scotland, France, and Flanders had been poisoned with the same venoms by Calvinism, but magic would always follow heretics because demons 'inhabited' them, just as they had worked the pagan idols, and used them like courtesans to deceive men, because heresy aped the magic arts and led to 'curiosity' in knowledge, and because of the negligence of churchmen.[42]

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[39] See, for example, Gillct, *Subtile el naijve recherche de* ^re$ie,2\l^ see also 342 5,360-2 (mispaginated as 370), 381–4 (for the authorship of this book, see above, Ch. [illegible] n. 45).

[40] Drawing on the same passage in *Malleus maleficarum*, 229, Stapleton listed exactly the violations ridiculed by Weyer as obviously anti-Catholic; see above, Ch. 9.

[41] Thomas St[illegible]leton, 'Cur magia pariter cum haeresi hodie creverit', in *Orationes academicae miscellaneae triginla qualuor*, in id., *Opera* (4 vols.; Paris, 1620), n.502-7 <4“o“ [illegible] at 505).

[42] Del *Rio, Dicquisitionum magicarum*, 'Proloquium'; cf. Maldonado, 7W/e *dec anger el demonc*, fos.

The French Counter-Reformation witchcraft authors Nodé, Crcspet, Massé, Michaelis, and Boucher were especially vocal in their denunciations of the witches who had overrun the Protestant territories in Germany and the British Isles and were threatening France. Their whole view of witchcraft was premissed on a historiography of heresy seen as the continuous expression of demonism.[43] Nodé, for example, traced it to the later medieval heresies, in particular to Hus, Wyclif, and Luther, and feared a future alliance between witches and Huguenots.[44] All the medieval heresies, said Massé, had had links with the magic arts, and the Anabaptists' resort to prophecy by divination was only a further example (this did not stop him calculating numerologically that Luther, Karlstadt, Zwingli, Oecolampadius, and Calvin were all part of the Antichrist).[45] Michaelis complained that the Genevan authorities neglected the laws against witchcraft but added that he was not surprised by this: 'for besides their rage in depressing as much as in them lies the honour of God and his Saints ... they have the property that all Hereticks naturally have, to love Magicians and Sorcerers'.[46]

Throughout Europe, indeed, Catholics could link the flourishing of witchcraft to the prevalence of the new heresies. In this way, witch-*hating* was certainly influenced and exacerbated by confession-hating, even if (so-called) witch-*hunting* resulted from additional, more complex, and, indeed, earlier circumstances.[47] To the extent that counter-reforming was seen as a sectarian as well as an evangelical process—entailing the obliteration of the enemy faiths as well as the improving of lay piety—anti-witchcraft legislation could be presented as one of its key ingredients. This was the argument of one of the most influential proclamations, the Ordinance of 1592 issued by the Viceroys of the Spanish Netherlands in the name of Philip II. In this sense, it is not the case that the disputes of the reformation era had no major impact on the history of witchcraft. Actual prosecutions, in reflecting, say, Protestant zeal, were reflecting what that zeal meant, and it meant anti-Catholicism; thus, witch-hunting could have been directed against things that were defined in terms of their anti-Catholicism, even if it was not necessarily directed against Catholic individuals. The same was true, presumably, for Catholic zeal. Stapleton demanded equal detest-

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156ᵛ-9ᵛ. On Del Rio, see Längin, *Religion und Hexenprozess,* 133-4. Cf. Fomer, *Panoplia armaturae Dei*, 2.

[43] [illegible] 560– [illegible] *[illegible]ections*, [illegible] 457–67; [illegible] Demons and Politics in France, 241–51. Crespet's is a model version of the historiography; *Deux Livres*, fos. 46ᵛ–66ᵛ, see also 82ᵛ–[illegible] or the [illegible]nation, in French Catholicism, of Protestant heresy with witchcraft [illegible], 174 [illegible] 22[illegible] in [illegible] of the People 1576–8: Benedict, 'The Catholic Response to Protestantism' in [illegible] in 1581. On Boucher [illegible] the pronouncements of the provincial council of the dioceses of Normandy at Rouen in 1581. On Boucher, see above, Ch. 25 and *Couronne mystique,* 422-602. For the equivalent view amongst legal theorists, see Le Caron [Charondas], 446, 61[illegible] *Responses*, [illegible]

[44] Nodé, *Declamation.* 58-66, see also 8-10.

[45] Massé, *De l'imposture,* fos. 111ʳ-20ᵛ.

at’°nofrnagic and heresy from his audience; for him, an age of religious reform must, of necessity, be an age of anti-magic and vice versa;

> For such is the affinity between them, being related in so many different ways ... that there is not a Christian who does not fight against the outrages of heresy and magic with the same hatred, and dread them with equal detestation. Just as to have dealings with magicians and witches, and to make peace with them, is abhorrent to all Christians, so the same commerce with heretics is to be rejected. Just as we imprison magicians by public authority, expel them from the community, and inflict terrible punishments on them, so we must take the same pains and use the same force against heretics. Just as the arts of magic, and their professors and books, cannot be suffered among Christians and are destroyed by sword and fire, so the same is decreed for heretics.[48]

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In some respects, it has proved fruitful to look for the interesting differences concerning witchcraft within, rather than between, the major faiths—matching the suggestion that both were divided internally by similar doctrinal disputes.[49] It was Erik Midelfort’s argument, for example, that during the sixteenth century all three confessional groups in south-western Germany were split internally between those who took a strongly ‘providential’ and, thus, moderating view of the crime, and those who adopted a more ‘fearful’ and punitive perspective in the manner of the *Malleus maleficarum.* This was not a question of confessional commitment but of how far men of religion were prepared to spiritualize human experience by raising its significance beyond the plane where physical harms by witches and devils and physical punishments and remedies against them mattered most. This was related in turn to the important tensions within later medieval theology, since, as the case of Martin Plantsch demonstrated, ‘providentialism’ owed much to nominalism as well as to the Book of Job. The possibility that the *via moderna* and the *via antiqua* had different implications for witchcraft beliefs has also been explored by Heiko Oberman. He has suggested that, whereas the latter attributed inherent efficacy to the means to salvation and thus allowed for its continuation when such means were misused in magic and witchcraft, the former regarded efficacy as dependent on divine acceptance, which operated normally via a covenant between God and the true church and was altogether non-transferable to demonic contexts. Plantsch (‘the last explicit mouthpiece for the Tübingen *via moderna* prior to the Reformation’) was thus able to demythologize magic and witchcraft by using a nominalist theory of causation to show that the perversion of sacramental power on which they were supposedly based simply could not take place. Sacramental signs signified a divine efficacy that could not be applied outside the correct ritual, and whatever efficacy did stem from spells or charms was not supernatural, not immanent, but drawn from the devil’s natural skills. Witchcraft could, therefore, exist for a nominalist but not because the demonic pact endowed it with anything inherently efficacious. Oberman summarizes Plantsch as saying:

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[48] Stapleton, *Oraliones*, 507.

[49] Delumeau, Naiuance, 363-7.

The devil has instituted his own sacraments ‘backed’ with his own powers in the course of his persistent attempts to imitate his divine Rival. The decisive difference lies in the fact that although Satan can promise to give his ‘sacraments’ effective power, he possesses no means of guaranteeing his promise in the manner in which God guarantees the sacraments of the church. Satan has only as much power as God is willing *ad hoc* to grant him.[50]

Views like these apparently set Plantsch apart from the authors of the *Malleus* and other Dominican inquisitors, whose ‘dogged’ defence of the *via antiqua* committed them to the demonic pact and to strenuous witch-hunting. It seems, too, that when later medieval Catholicism’s internal philosophical and theological disagreements worked their way into demonology’, they' reinforced different attitudes to witchcraft that already existed. In effect, two forms ofdiabolization emerged from the medieval church, one (the ‘Augustinian’) belittling the reality of the black arts and attributing their imaginary nature to demonic deception, the other (the ‘Thomist’) accepting their reality and the reality of sects of heretical practitioners and demanding punitive and inquisitorial measures against them. This is the proposal of Julio Caro Baroja, who attempts to assign early modern Catholic writers on magic and witchcraft to one or other of these two traditions. Once again, the *Canon episcopi* is seen as emblematic of the first and the *Malleus,* with its Dominican authors, of the second. The clash of views is neatly illustrated in the confrontation between the Franciscan Samuel de Cassini, who upheld the *Canon,* denounced the sabbat as a total fantasy, and attacked inquisitorial treatment of witches, and the Dominican Vincente Dodo, who replied that the *Canon* was irrelevant and took what became the conventional view regarding the sabbat.[51]

There can be no doubt that, in these early phases, Catholic demonology’ was subject to such internal divisions. The frequency with which the question of the application of the *Canon episcopi* was debated is evidence enough of this. Even so, these particular disputes did not last and cannot be used to characterize the later phases of the literature. The points at issue were simply built into demonological debate where they became topoi to be discussed, rather than matters of confrontation. In 1506 Dodo was already saying that, while the sabbat could actually take place, it could also be imaginary. What was already becoming the conventional view, as we saw’ in an earlier section of this book, was one capable of sustaining both the real and the illusory-aspects of demonism, thus absorbing the impact of the *Canon episcopi* and rendering it harmless. There are also difficulties in attributing the divisions to philosophical and theological schools. Some of Plantsch’s conclusions may be ‘nominalist’ ones but they are quite unremarkable in the context, again, of what was to be the mainstream

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w Oberman, *Masters of the Reformation*, 170, sec also 174.

” Julio Caro Baroja,‘Witchcraft and Catholic Theology’, in Ankarloo and Henninesen feds), *Early Modem European Witchcraft,* 19-13. The confrontation is in Samuel de Cassini,*S^edehStriT^A* Vincente Dodo, *Apologia Dodi contra li defensori de le strie et principaliter contra questiones lamiarum fratris Samueht de Cauinu* (Pavia, 1506). For a recent account, summarizing the anruments see RMMiMn ‘Les Premieres Controverses sur la realite du sabbat dans l’Italie du xvr silT’T‘ J Préaud (eds.), *LeSabbat dec wrcierc,* 55-62. ’,n J’cques-Chaqum and

view and they altogether lack the 'enlightening' and 'debunking' force (not to mention the 'liberal rationality') that Oberman seeks in them.[52] To take efficacy away from demonic means and attribute it to (providentially controlled) demonic powers was not only to do what every orthodox witchcraft theorist did, it was to do something that had Aquinas's philosophical blessing. Witches themselves may have had no power for Plantsch; neither had they in any other formulation of witchcraft. And far from this removing the demonic pact, it actually necessitated it, as hundreds of accounts of its at least implicit presence, given by others indebted to nominalism from Gerson onwards, bear witness. Thus, whatever difference nominalism made, it does not seem to have made very much—unless we are to say that all the standard formulations of demonic efficacy were philosophically 'nominalist'.[53] In the end, too, labels like 'Augustinian' and 'Thomist' cease to have any precise use as alternatives in this context, since, eventually, writers drew freely on both these great authorities to sustain the demonology of the witchcraft prosecutions. Finally, the very question of the relative severity of attitudes to witch-hunting across philosophical schools has been further complicated by a recent claim that the *via moderna,* in separating nature from grace, made intellectuals more, not less, obsessed with the devil and undermined their confidence in his subordination. As long as nature was seen as intrinsically good, the devil's influence over it was limited; without that assumption, his interference became immediate and, with God's will, arbitrary. Since nominalism retained its hold over Catholic intellectuals beyond Trent, even over those who also drew eclectically from Aquinas, it continued (in this view) to exacerbate their fear of witches.[54]

In view of these difficulties—and the fact that most demonological writing lacked the sort of intellectual subtlety one associates with the philosophical and theological disputes of the later medieval period—it might be better to account for differences of emphasis within Catholicism in other terms. We have seen in preceding chapters that those who took up the attack on 'magic' and 'superstition', who demonized these sins and made them into witchcraft, and then sought to eradicate them, were responding not merely to intellectual but to evangelical imperatives. They were the Catholics who took with special seriousness the duty to change lay belief and behaviour by suppression and indoctrination, for whom 'reformation' meant vigorous acculturation and the stern punishment of error. Those who added, or preferred, an interest in the witchcraft of the sabbat were, likewise, driven by considerations of purity in danger, the Church beseiged by its enemies, and the need for a militant response. Thus Catholic demonology was characteristically a subject for Dominicans and Jesuits, for the anatomists of sin (many of them, it is true, neo-scholastics),

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« **Oberman, *Masters of the Reformation,* 163, 170, 174; Oberman overestimates the originality of Plantsch and misweighs his arguments because, like many readers of demonology, he has not given enough attention to the orthodoxies and conventions of the genre, preferring instead to glamorize one particulartext.**

[M] **For the difficulties in using the label 'nominalist' at all, see McGrath, *Intellectual Origins,* 7Q-5.**

[54] **Cervantes, *Devil in the New World,* 17-25.**

and for inquisitors. In France it was associated politically with the Holy League during the Wars of Religion and the *dévot* party thereafter, whose zeal set them apart from the Gallicans in the *parlement* of Paris and the judiciary.[55] Conversely, Erasmianism has been linked to scepticism in the field of demonology and lukewarmness regarding witchcraft prosecutions.[56] Moreover, much the same pressures were at work in the production of Protestant demonology. The reasons why some Lutherans and Calvinists rather than others chose to preach or write in a specialist way about witchcraft had little, if anything, to do with a distinctive philosophical or theological position. In this latter respect, Protestant demonology was homogeneous. The motivation, instead, stemmed from activism in the tasks of reformation—the sort we might associate with the 'puritans' of the Elizabethan and Jacobean church but not with some of their episcopal and archiepiscopal colleagues.

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Ultimately, however, the religious reasons for taking witchcraft seriously or not can be related to differences between what (following Ernst Troeltsch) we might call the 'church-type' and the 'sect-type' churches of early modern Europe. Atheists, libertines, and other 'unbelievers' who (when they existed at all) recognized no religion and no church were, presumably, not touched by any demonology either. But church members had very divergent social doctrines, moralities, and even theologies, depending on the type of organization to which they belonged, and these were reflected in their views about religious deviance. For Troeltsch (writing in 1912) a 'Church' was, in principle, universal, because its aim was 'to cover the whole life of humanity'; compulsory, because it tried to impose its values and institutions on all the members of a society; and conservative, because it embraced and became integral to the secular order and reinforced that order's social and political hierarchies. He spoke of it utilizing and interweaving with the state and its ruling classes and becoming dependent on them. 'Sects', on the other hand, were highly selective, always voluntary, and usually radical. They:

> aspire after personal inward perfection, and they aim at a direct personal fellowship between the members of each group. From the very beginning, therefore, they are forced to organize themselves in small groups, and to renounce the idea of dominating the world. Their attitude towards the world, the State, and Society may be indifferent, tolerant, or hostile, since they have no desire to control and incorporate these forms of social life; on the contrary, they tend to avoid them; their aim is usually either to tolerate their presence alongside of their own body, or even to replace these social institutions by their own society.[57]

The Church, moreover, controls access to the supernatural by associating it with ecclesiastical conformity, channelling asceticism into the achievements of a heroic class of monastics, and monopolizing the means to salvation; for the Sects, on the other hand, the supernatural is directly available to the individual through the personal asceticism of detaching from the world and (for example) refusing ‘to use the law, to swear in a court of justice, to own property, to exercise dominion over others, or to take part in war’ . The Church is sacerdotal and sacramental, claiming a monopoly of truth and power and the right to supervise faith and punish heresy. The typical characteristics of the Sect, in contrast, are,

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[55] Pearl, 'Demons and Politics', 241-51.

[56] Trevor-Roper, *European Witch-Craze,* 56-7; Gielis, 'Netherlandic Theologians' Views of Witchcraft', 48. For Erasmus and Weyer, see Ch. 13 above; for Erasmus and Reginald Scot, sec Estes 'Rezinald Scot and his *Discoverie of Witchcraft'*, 448-9.

[57] Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches,* trans. Olive Wyon (2 vols.; London, 1931), i. 331.

> lay Christianity, personal achievement in ethics and in religion, the radical fellowship of love, religious equality and brotherly love, indifference towards the authority of the State and the ruling classes, dislike of technical law and of the oath, the separation of the religious life from the economic struggle by means of the ideal of poverty and frugality, or occasionally in a charity which becomes communism, the directness of the personal religious relationship, criticism of official spiritual guides and theologians, the appeal to the New Testament and to the Primitive Church.”

This is an ideal-typical distinction, of course, but its relevance to the history of witchcraft is that it suggests a further important differential in the very meaning of the crime. In the context of church-type religious organizations—in effect, ‘state churches’—witchcraft was a serious counter-institutional competitor for the allegiance of potentially all Christians. Its significance lay precisely in the challenge it posed to universal domination, and the magistrate must play a part in stamping it out. The powers of the devil threatened directly the miraculous basis of church-type authority and had to be carefully downgraded to the status of mere wonders. The witch was the apparent rival of the official priesthood, whether professionally as purveyor of alternative therapies, or sacramentally as perverter of the vehicles and signs of grace. The ceremonies of the sabbat were invariably the inverse of required liturgical norms, and its entire mood was in direct contravention of a church-type asceticism based on what Troeltsch called ‘the repression of the senses’. Superstition was always tied to conceptions of true religion as a public and official cult. At the same time, the devil, hell with its terrors, and witchcraft itself were all contributors to the moral systems of the state churches and, in some respects, indispensable to their functioning. They provided the mirror-images of their positive equivalents, and they were sanctions against sinning. Punishing demonism and witchcraft made a valuable statement about collective orthodoxy and its enforcement. In every way, then, the witchcraft found in traditional demonology was an ecclesiastical crime, and the fact that it allegedly flourished among the laity was an affront to religious evangelism. Its very significance was relative to the expectations of church-type Christians.

Transferred into the realm of the sects, witchcraft presumably lost all these terrors. Detached from claims to monopoly and inclusivity, religious deviance takes on altogether different connotations. Sects that turned their backs on the world and its institutions could not have treated religious apostasy either as a threat to

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« Ibid. i. 336.

ecclesiastical unity or as a token of social and political disorder. Since secular magistracy had no relevance to church affairs whatsoever, there was no transfer to be made from the spiritual to the political meanings of witchcraft. In eschewing worldly values and morality, they were necessarily emptying many of witchcraft's perversions of their meaning, as well as abandoning the punitive legalism that fuelled witch trials. Alienation from the world entailed the irrelevance of that world's perceived foes. If the orthodox state church was degenerate, then its claim to be environed with demonic enemies lost its force. To reject the sacramental channels of grace and their priestly administrators was simultaneously to redefine things like blasphemy and profanity and remove competition altogether from religious service. To give up evangelism and 'magisterial' dogma was, likewise, to abandon official correctness as a test of faith. 'The individualism of the sect', wrote Troeltsch, 'urges it towards the direct intercourse of the individual with God'; at the same time, an ideal of religious fellowship holds the group together in brotherly association. Its ethic is that of the gospel rather than the Law—the Sermon on the Mount rather than the Decalogue—and its spirituality is highly personal and subjective. None of this, it seems, would have accommodated traditional fears of witchcraft. One can imagine the devil acting as instigator of malice between sect-type Christians, in which case the 'witches' among them would have been disciplined, eventually by exclusion from the elect group, like any other evildoers. But with their ideals of fellowship and their programmes of mutual support, sectarian communities were less prone to the interpersonal disputes that lay behind traditional witchcraft accusations. And in any case, the devil was much more likely to be seen as a spiritual opponent, making 'witchcraft' no more than an inward obstacle to personal achievement and 'hell' a name for its whereabouts in the soul.

The views of the early modern sectaries concerning witchcraft are a neglected subject. The history of radical religious groups in Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands certainly bears out much of Troeltsch's typology of sect-type churches, and makes it clear that they often took up doctrinal and moral positions that were, in principle, inimical to traditional demonology.[59] These included the abandonment of the idea of territorial reform, the rejection of magistracy and capital punishment in religious affairs, pacifism, confessional toleration, perfectionism and mysticism, and psychopannychism or mortalism (the doctrine of the sleep or death of the soul prior to the resurrection). Sectaries and mystics were much more likely than orthodox witchcraft theorists to prefer figurative to literal readings of biblical texts. One historian of the Anabaptists speaks of their indifference to theology.[60] It is also
to see how they could have equated witchcraft with heresy,
prosecution did sometimes say that
crime was an 'anabaptist' error.[61]

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churches to their magisterial competitors, and, even here, spiritualized readings of the last t.mes tended to predominate over the literal ones required for serious witch-hating. It is somehow indicative that Thomas Miintzcr should have preached that Exodus 22:18, was to be rendered as ‘Thou shall not suffer evildoers to live’, and that Giacomo Aconcio’s *Stratagematum Satanae* (1555) treated the devil in entirely symbolic terms as the motivator of religious discord.[62] No doubt accused of witchcraft (amongst other crimes) by their many enemies, the radicals may well prove to be the least ‘demonological’ of all the religious groups of the age.

This seems to has’ e been the case with the Netherlands Anabaptists and spiritualists of the sixteenth century, of whom the most renowned, David Joris of Delft, taught that original sin was an inner (and thus reversible) process, that the devil was merely the fallen nature of each individual, and that witchcraft was ‘nothing’.[63] Among the Dutch witchcraft writers of the next century, it was the Mennonites Jan Jansz Dcutel, Antonius van Dale, and Abraham Palingh who initiated the most sceptical arguments, adopting a strict spiritualism and providentialism that eclipsed demonic physical activity altogether and made the idea of the witches’ pact untenable. Mennonites were also active among the Collegiants, a radical religious movement that drew on Dutch Arminianism and Cartesian philosophy, and, after decades of exploring spiritualism, free prophecy, and other undogmatic and non-exclusive forms of piety, took Bekker’s arguments further than even he had taken them by arguing against the activities of good as well as evil spirits.[64] It is known that Johann Weyer corresponded with his youngest brother, Matthias, a spiritualist and mystic, concerning the ideas of Menno Simons’s associate, Dirck Philips, and those of the founder of the Family of Love, Hendrick Niclaes, both of whose works Johann had evidently been reading. Whether their radical theologies

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[u] **G. H. Williams (cd.), *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers: Documents Illustrative of the Radical Reformation* (London, 1957), *bfrfvL, Radical Reformation,* 154,1203-4, who regards Aconcio as an‘Evangelical Rationalist’. *Slratagematum Satanae* was published at Base! in 1555, with a French trans, in 1565 and an English in 1648.**

[u] **Gar}- K. Waite, * “Man is a Devil to Himself”: David Joris and the Rise of a Sceptical Tradition towards the Devil in the Early Modem Netherlands, 1540-1600’, *NederlandsArchiefvoor Kerkgeschiedenis/Dutch Rev. of Church Hist.,* 75 (1995) 1-30; I am most grateful to the author for allowing me to read this paper before publication.**

[M] **Dcutel’s *Een kort tractaelje tegen de toovery vns* written in 1638 and first pub. in 1670. Palingh’s dialogue **t Afgerukt Mom-aansight der Tooverye* appeared in 1659, dedicated to the magistrates of Haarlem. For these authors I rely on a partly unpub. paper by Gary K. Waite, ‘From David Joris to Balthasar Bekker? The Radical Reformation and the Rise of a Sceptical Tradition towards the Devil in the Early Modem Netherlands (1540-1700), 13-17, together with Gijswijt-Hofstra, ‘Recent Witchcraft Research’, 31; cad., ‘Doperse gelviden over magie cn toverij: Twisclc, Deutel, Palingh en Van Dale’, m A. Lambo (cd.), *Oecumennisme* (Amsterdam, 1989), 69-83 (English summary kindly provided by Angela van der Made); and Hans de Waardt, ‘Abraham Palingh. Ein hollandischer Baptist und die Macht des Teufels’, in Lehmann and Ulbricht (eds.), Kom *Unfug des Hexen-Processes,* 247-68. Anthomus van Dale *sDeoraculis elhnicorum dissertationes duae(\fto)* «« also pub. in Dutch *vVerhandehng van de oude Orak'lender heydenen* (Amsterdam, 1687); I have consulted the English trans, by Aphra Behn (from a free adaput on of the original by Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle), *The hutory of oracles (tendon,* 1688). On he demonology of the Collegiants I follow Andrew Fix, ‘Angek, Devils, andTv,!Sp.ntsin Seventeenth-Century Thought: Balthasar Bekker and the Collegiants *J. Hut. Ideas,* 50(1989), 527-47.**

were consistent with his ow'n heavy reliance on the devil as a physical agent must, however, be doubted.[65]

In England, too, it was the sectaries of the 1640s and 1650s, together with their clandestine predecessors, who were associated with the kind of radical anti-Calvinism that rejected a physical hell and physical devils. The symbolic location of hell in the hearts of men and women was suggested by, or attributed to, the Familists, John Evcrard, the ‘ranter’ pamphleteers Jacob Bauthumley and Lawrence Clarkson, and the ‘digger’ prophet Gerrard Winstanlcy.[66] Much of the mystical recategorization that went on in ‘ranter’ literature was directed specifically against those traditional religious polarities that sustained orthodox witchcraft beliefs, but which ‘ranters’ wanted to transcend. Robert Norwood, for example, explicitly rejected the notion of *concordia discors* in favour of the view that the creation was composed of ‘Severalls, or Divers’. Dualisms may still have been prevalent in radical religious writing but the urge to resolve them spiritually turned them into aspects of the unregencratc world.[67] It was in order to spiritualize the devil and witchcraft, and to defend mortalism, that Lodowick Muggleton published a ‘true interpretation’ of the witch of Endor story in 1669. ‘There is no other devil’, he wrote, ‘or spirit, or familiar spirit for witches to deal withal, or to work any enchantments by, but their own imagination.’[6]’ In giving the devil only a symbolic existence, the religious sects encouraged the view that was also central to witchcraft scepticism, that his role in human affairs could never take a material form.

Of great significance, in this respect, is the evidence linking the two most effective witchcraft sceptics in England with religious radicalism. In the case ofReginald Scot, this takes the form of an association with Abraham Fleming, whose theology was similar to Scot’s but whose *Diamond of Devotion* has suggested to David Wootton contacts with Elizabethan Familism. Among alleged Familist beliefs was the usual view of the spiritualists, but also the view of Scot, that the witches and devils in scripture should be treated metaphorically.[69] Moreover, in the 1665 edition *ofThediscoverie of witchcraft* a further anonymous treatise was added as ‘book 2’ to Scot’s own supplementary ‘Discourse of divels and spirits’, containing arguments presumably

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[41] Alastair Hamilton, *The Family of Love* (Cambridge, 1981), 49; I am grateful to Gary Waite for this reference, and for further information concerning Matthias Weyer.

“ For these and many other examples, Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (London, 1972), 23, 149,172,176-7,and esp. 136—45; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 170-1.

[67] Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed,* 230-44, esp. 235.1 owe the citation from Robert Norwood’s *An additional discourse relating unto a treatise... intituled A pathway to Englands perfect settlement* (London, 1653), 6, to an unpublished paper kindly made available by Peter Elmer: ’John Webster’s *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft (VETl)'.* Occultism, Religious Radicalism and the Decline of Witchcraft in Seventeenth-Century England’. On Norwood’s Ranter associations, see Hill, *World Turned Upside Down,* 181.

“ Lodowick Muggleton, *A true interpretation of the witch of Endor,* 5th edn. (London, 1856), 1; Christopher Hill, Barry Reay, and William Lamont, *The World of the Muggletonians* (London, 1983), 122–4.

[w] Here I depend totally on an unpublished paper, kindly made available by David Wootton; ‘The Serpent in the Garden: Reginald Scot and Abraham Fleming’. Wootton also finds elements of perfectionism, egalitarianism, and Nicodemism in Scot, Fleming, and the Familists.

felt to complement those in the original text but derived from the radical theology of the 1650s. Amongst them was the reduction of demonic activity to mental operations internal to the ‘hell’ that was the state of mind of evil persons.[70]

John Webster was a Grindletonian in the 1630s and later an anabaptist and seeker.[71] There were important elements of Behmenism, perfectionism, and antinomianism in his sermons and writings, and his eschatology’ was non-literal. In 1653 he preached that ‘in the Day that the Soul turns to the Lord, then ... that Hell men so much talk of, he sees to be really in himself, and that himself is the very Image of the Devil.’ ‘Antichrist and witches’ were also thought to be external deceivers, he said on another occasion, but ‘however man is carried out to look for all these things without him, yet be sure these Sorcerers, these Wizzards, these Necromancers ... Devils, Antichrists, all are in thine own bosome. Here is the true Necromancy and Witchcraft, the true Antichrist.’ By 1677, when Webster published *The displaying of supposed witchcraft* he was conforming and had given up active radicalism. But he was still deploying this earlier theology, and nowhere more so than in his insistence that the only way to talk about a demonic pact was in purely ‘mental’ and ‘spiritual’, not ‘visible’ or ‘corporeal’ terms.[72]

As in Continental Europe, the religious radicals of mid-seventeenth-century England were accused of weakening witchcraft belief—in this case, by Restoration Anglicans. There were even occasions when the labelling processes at work in traditional witchcraft beliefs were thrown into reverse. When Winstanley called the clergy ‘witches’ and said that their interests were demonic, was he not turning round a field of force that, for half a century, had led zealots like George Gifford and Arthur Dent to reject popular culture as implicit, if not explicit, sorcery? One of the most extraordinary things about Winstanley’s extraordinary book, *The law of freedom in a platform* (1652), is that he *retains* the death penalty for witchcraft but defines a witch as ‘He who professes the service of a righteous God by preaching and prayer’.[73] This is not to escape completely from the mentality of witch-hunting, but it does demonstrate vividly the rejection by the unorthodox of the church-type religiosity of those who usually promoted it. One of the reasons, we may suppose, for the decline of witchcraft prosecutions and of witchcraft beliefs in general was the coming of a religious pluralism that permitted the members of all types of churches to coexist and spelt the end of the confessional state.

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[70] Reginald Scot, *The discovery of witchcraft... whereunto is added an excellent discourse of the nature and substance of devils and spirits, in two books: the first by the aforesaid author: the second now added in this third edition, as succedaneous to the former, and conducing to the competing of the whole work* (London, 1665), 39-72; Elmer, ‘John Webster’s *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft*.

[71] Hill, *World Turned Upside Down*, 66, 153.

[72] I summarize here the findings of Peter Elmer, *The Library of Dr John* [illegible] *Radical*, *Medical Hist.*, [illegible] (1986), 2–12 [illegible] 1650s sermons cited p. 3 and n. 7); cf. Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed*, 191, 217-19.

[73] [illegible] *The law of freedom in a platform*, in [illegible] *The Works of Gerrard Winstanley* (Ithaca, NY, 1941), 597. Immanuel Bourne, *A defence of the scriptures* (London, 1656), dedication, complained that the Quakers too called the clergy witches.

PART V

Politics

36

Witchcraft and Politics

> I had not known sin, but by the law.
>
> (Romans 7:7)

> The nature of institutions is nothing but their coming into being *(nascimento)* at certain times and in certain guises. Whenever the time and guise are thus and so, such and not otherwise arc the institutions that come into being.
>
> (Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico)*

THIS book has been a study of some of the principal idioms of demonological enquiry. While not necessarily the object of each and every text, the symbolic, the physical, the temporal, and the spiritual were all none the less essential modifications of the discourse on witchcraft. They represent the phases through which the ideal demonological argument might have passed; if this is not too Hegelian, they arc its moments. But we arc still left with one outstanding category, the category of practice. Although it has intruded in previous discussions, notably that of religion, its appropriate placing is last. ‘In practical experience’, it has been said, ‘reality is asserted under the category of change.” The logical closure of the ideal argument was a call to action. At this point authors asked practical questions about what concrete steps should be taken to rid the world of witchcraft, who should undertake them, and how they should proceed.

In the *Malletts malejicarum* and the demonologies by Molitor, Grillando, Weyer, Bodin, Godelmann, Remy, James VI and I, and de Lancre this discussion of remedies and punishments was actually reserved for the final pages. The German clergymen also offer some typical examples. ‘How the Magistrate should Resist Magic’ was the title of the very last of Ludwig Milichius’s thirty-eight chapters; ‘What it is Due to the Secular Magistrate to Do on Account of Witches’ was the theme of the eighth of David Meder’s eight sermons.[1] [2] [3] Bernhard Albrecht concluded with ‘Whether the Secular Magistrate does Right thereby, when he Punishes Witches and Magicians with Death?’, and Johann Ellinger with ‘Whether Witchmasters, Magicians and Sorceresses *(Zauberinne)* too Should be Put to Death?” In Geneva and England, Daneau, Cooper, and Bernard appealed finally to the magistrate class. The Dane

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[1] Oakeshott, *Experience and its Modes,* 273.

[1] Milichius, *Zauber Teujfel,* in Stambaugh (cd.), *Teufelbiicher,* i. 181 —4; Meder, *Acht hexenpredigten,* fos. 107'-19'.

[3] Albrecht, *Magia,* 292-314; Ellinger, *Hexen Coppel,* S2-5. Cf. Praetorius, *Von Zauberey undZaubern,* 128-313; Samson, *Neun ... Hexenpredigt,*sigs. Uiv*-Xiii’.

Niels Hemmingsen proposed to finish his *Admonitio de superstitionibus magicis vitandis* by 'saying something about the office of the Christian magistrate or judge'.[4]

Writers reserved other matters for discussion in this context—for example, legal and procedural technicalities concerning the treatment of evidence, the securing of testimony, the application of torture, and the exact choice of punishment. But these headings make it abundantly clear that the central preoccupation was the role of the magistrate in the fight against a crime. Ritual act, natural phenomenon, historical event, offence against God—witchcraft now became a social sin, a violation of laws, and a threat to civil order. The duty of magistrates (it was mostly argued) was to protect the community by using the full weight of their office to eradicate those responsible. 'Policy' demanded the punishment of witches, wrote the Englishman John Gaulc in 1646, 'because they disturb her peace'.[5]

Although there has never been the slightest obscurity about this particular element in demonology, there have been few attempts to understand the general assumptions which inspired it. Yet there is no such thing as a presuppositionless call for change: 'The world of practical experience is a world of judgements, not of mere actions, volitions, feelings, intuitions, instincts or opinions.'[6] In describing witchcraft as a social evil authors necessarily invoked a conception of the social order, an idea of *conimunitas.* In addressing magistrates they committed themselves to views about authority and about the general desirability of certain forms of rulership. In asking for the implementation of punishment they appealed to notions of justice and the requirements of divine, natural, and positive law. In all this, and in demanding and justifying action in the public domain, they spoke what can only be termed the language of politics. We will not begin to understand the urge to prosecute witches until we try to discover what sort of politics this was.[7]

In this instance, as in previous discussions, I prefer to think in the broadest terms. It would be hopelessly wrong to claim that at this point demonology became a branch of political philosophy, even though in the case of Jean Bodin we shall find that there was no intellectual barrier between the most extreme version of the first and the most advanced form of the second. (The last book of Hobbes's *Leviathan* is also a demonology.) In no account of demons and witches were ideas about politics articulated with the sophistication that is usually expected of high theory. Nor can the ideas themselves compete in stature with those found in what have often been regarded as the 'great texts' of the history of political thought. Rather, they are mostly the stock-in-trade, the everyday commodities of political exchange-what (as has been said in another context) was 'axiomatic' in attitudes to the subject[8] *

None of this, however, alters the essential nature of the issues involved. My spring-point is simply the claim that to invoke magistracy at all, however trite the formulation or ephemeral the occasion, is not merely a practical course of action but necessarily presupposes a normative political language. In any case (and this is a somewhat stronger claim), one can be too apologetic about so-called second- or third-rate books. One of the main problems with the history of political thought as traditionally studied was that judgements about the sophistication and stature of arguments conducted in the past were tied to the needs of abstract political philosophy undertaken without regard to context. For this reason, the once-obligatory attention paid to a canon of classic thinkers, deemed to have addressed certain perennial problems at the required intellectual standard, has for some time seemed inadequate. It has been suggested that the texts considered to be 'great' may not typify the styles of political thought most characteristic of their own time, or the problems considered then to be most pressing; that they arc only fully intelligible against a background of more commonplace assumptions and beliefs, too familiar to need full exposition at an advanced level of discourse but too important to be neglected by ordinary writers; and that, in consequence, the historical location of political theories, as well as their links with political behaviour, may be better grasped from a study of lesser authors writing in a more routine fashion and using 'the general political vocabulary of the age'.[9]

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[4] Hemmingsen, *Admonitio,* sig. N5^{V}. [5] Gaulc, *Cases of conscience* 177

[6] Oakeshott, *Experience and its Modes, 256.*

[7] Tanner, *Tractatustheologicus,* 43-4, talked of two modes of action attains [illegible] wit[illegible]ches, the spIntal and the 'political*. The second involved removing the social conditions that mad[illegible] peopl[illegible] susccpU^^C 10 demonism in the first place, and taking legitimate legal action against them if th- [illegible] hcy succu^ed.

• I borrow the term from Bossy, *Christianity,* 91 and *passim.*

These suggestions have recently found their counterparts in the historiography of early modern science, in a good deal of critical theory, and, above all, in 'new historicist' readings of literary texts from this period. But there is a sense (and this would be the strongest claim of all) in which the very designations 'greater' and 'lesser' always intrude on the proper judgements of the historian, for whom relevance is not a matter of conformity or nonconformity to the canonical requirements of some specific intellectual tradition but of what is required for the better understanding of past modes of thought. One of the main advantages of the now developed field of the history* of mentalities is that it has been largely unconcerned with the apportioning of intellectual merit, focusing more neutrally* on the structure of belief systems and the habitual forms of thinking they sustain; and it is the history of political mentalities that will be attempted here.

This is not to say that demonology merely mirrored routine political sentiments; although, to recognize the extent that it did is, as I have argued in other contexts, to begin to acknowledge its intellectual probity. As we have found in every other area of the subject, there was a mutually reinforcing relationship of ideas. In talking about authority witchcraft authors adopted one of the dominant political vocabularies of the period; in resorting to St Paul, in speaking of magistracy as a divine stewardship or ministry, and in deriving all their models of action from the Old Testament, they shared what has been called, crudely but not unhelpfully, the ‘descending’ theory of government. Indeed, witchcraft was only the crime it was, and the duty to punish it could only be seen as religious, in those areas of political culture that were very largely committed to theocratic principles and where authority was inherently sacred. It was (I shall argue) precisely because there was a mystical dimension to politics that there was a political dimension to magic; both were modifications of the same world of thought.

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[9] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (2 vols.; [illegible]ge, 1978), i. x-xv (quotation at xiii). Cf. Greenleaf, *Order, Empiricism and Politics*, 11–13; D[illegible] [illegible]ttin 'The [illegible] of God in Early Modern Political Theory', in Canadian Historical Association, *Historical Papers 1983* (Ottawa, 1984), 79 (on 'underpinning assumptions', i.e. 'those issues which authors and their audiences so took for granted that they felt they were scarcely in need of discussion').

In reverse, demonology was itself capable of enunciating theocratic political ideals with unusual, even unique, force. The proposal that demonic power could be nullified by the authority of the godly ruler made the magistrate and the witch adversaries of a very special kind; in effect, it made witchcraft prosecutions a critical test of political legitimacy. In the rituals of the trial-room, but also in the symbolism of royal court festivals, demons and witches became the perfect antagonists of those who claimed power by divine right, since their defeat could only result from supernatural, not physical superiority. The defendants in the North Berwick witchcraft trials, accused of treasonable *maleficium* by James VI, asked the devil why ‘all ther dcvellerie culd do na harm to the King, as it did till others dyvers’. The reply they received is epigraphic: ‘Il est un home de Dieu.’[10] [11] But as well as morally antipathetic, magistrates and witches were morally equivalent; their symmetry was as important as their opposition. ‘Those appointed to judge witches’, wrote the anthropologist and historian Julio Caro Baroja in a memorable phrase, ‘were sometimes akin to the people they were trying to destroy: at heart they were inverted sorcerers’." In early modern mythography it was usual to trace both the arts of government and the arts of magic to the god Jupiter. An act of justice against witches, remarked Martin Del Rio, brought together the servants of God and the servants of the devil.[12] The physician who defended the ‘royal touch’ of Charles II of England, John Browne, cited Augustine to the effect that ‘Magicians do work Miracles one way, good Men another way; ill Men only by Demoniacal Contract, good Men by publick Justice.’[13] Just as witchcraft was historically appropriate in an age which appeared to be the last, so too it was politically fitting in societies where rulership was considered sacrosanct and kings still healed. It should not really surprise us that it interested those with apocalyptic views of time or supernaturalist views of authority. Miracle and magic provided competing, but proximate, imageries of power; only something entirely contingent—legitimacy—separated them.[14]

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[10] **Sir James Melville, *Memoirs 1549-93* (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1827), 395.**

[11] **Caro Baroja, *World of the Witches,* 204.**

[12] **See below, Ch. 38. Ccrtcau, *Writing of History,* 245, speaks, correctly in my view, of a binary structure defining the relation of judges and witches and of the struggle between them as *an internecine warfare between two social categories’.**

[11] **John Browne, *Adenochoiradelogia* (London, 1684), pt. 3,55.**

[14] **For this as the ultimate issue in witchcraft, see Ccrteau, *L’Absent de l’hisloire,* 33 n. 29. In the parallel context provided by the Calvinist theology of misfortune, Ann Kibbey speaks of an ‘ideological threat of resemblance’ between divine power and witchcraft that writers attempted to resolve by superimposing a ‘stark, dualist opposition ... over a chronic similarity in the acts attributed to the deity and the witch’. In this way, ‘the image of the deity as the author of remarkable providences, and the image of the witch as the**

To some extent, then, we are dealing with witchcraft as a property conferred on individuals according to the principles (some might say the prejudices) of a specific kind of political society. Its identity as a crime was subject to judgements about conformity and deviance made by those with broadly theocratic conceptions of rulership and the systems of legal control in which these judgements were embodied. As one contemporary put it, if the prince was a divine figure on earth, 'it must of necessitie follow, that... his lawes should have a taste and resemblance of Gods laws also',[15] amongst which were those given to Moses to combat witchcraft. The fact that forms of dev iance must be relative to the standards of a community makes us all exponents of labelling theory to some extent. What is more difficult is to speak of witchcraft as something created merely to serve the (possibly latent) political purposes of that community's judicial elite. We shall see that this was the conclusion reached by some of the more radical contemporary critics of the witch trials, who believed that the reasons for them were anything but latent. But the prevailing view of deviance was precisely the one that labelling theory has sought to transcend—it was normative and correctional.[16] The conceptual puzzle is that within any rule-following and rule-enforcing community it only makes sense to speak of crime in this normative way, and it is not at all clear what any particular crime could mean outside this context. Moreover, if the criteria of what is normal or deviant are internal to such a community, then it is difficult to see how it could be mistaken about the grounds for designating an action as criminal—mistaken, that is, in the sense that what was thought to be a real quality objectively inherent in an action (such as witchcraft) was in fact merely one of the community's own artefacts. This is not just an empirical difficulty; the criteria for establishing witchcraft as a crime were certainly disputed, but there seems to be no obvious interpretative advantage in siding with any of the disputants.

Similar cautions apply to the view that the witch trials were an episode in the formation of early modern absolutism.[17] To add confessional uniformity to institutional centralization—to control minds as well as bodies—was an understandable ambition of governments, and the pursuit of spiritual dissidents in the courts could be its

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author of malcficium, were positive and negative forms of a single idea about supernatural power. see cad., 'Mutations of the Supernatural*, 135,127,137.

[11] Bamabe Barnes, *Four bookes of offices* (London, 1606), 131.

“ Applications of labelling theory to early modem witchcraft include K. Enkson, *Wayward Puntans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York, 1966), and E. P. Currie, 'The Control of Witchcraft in Renaissance Europe', in D. Black and M. Mileski (eds.), *The Social Organization of Law* (London, 1973), 344-67.

” For the relationship between state-building and witchcraft trials, sec Hartmut Lehmann 'Hexenvcrfolgungcn und Hcxenprozesse im Altcn Reich zwischen Reformation und Aufklarung' JaArtorA *det Imtituttfir Deutsche Getehichte dec Univertitat Tel-Aviv* 7 <'9™\1377o: Greb [illegible] ^^t Lan^deund [illegible] exen-**prozesse im Freigericht Alzenau, 1601–1605', *Aschaffenburger Ja[illegible]uch für [illegible]e, Kunst des Untermaingebietes*, 6 (1979), 141–240; Larner, *Enemies of God*, 192–9; Muchembled *Popular Cul-*** *lure,* zjo *IB,* Kiaacr oym , [illegible] **oens 'Intellectual and Political Backgrounds', 43–4, 60–1 (stressing the role of university faculties as exponents of state** ;deoioev) I have also benefited from an unpublished paper by **Robert Walinski-Kiehl 'Judicial Torture, Confessional Absolutism and Witch-Hunting in Early Modern** Germany' (presented a't the Second International Conference on the History of Crime and Cnminal Justice, Maastricht, May 1984), which he kindly made avadable.

practical outcome. Control of political loyalties was, after all, felt to rest on control of denominational ones.'[8] The danger here is that state-building itself becomes the primary focus of attention. Historians tend to think of this in secular and utilitarian (that is to say, rationalistic) terms as largely a matter of administrative function, and conformity even in religion is seen as instrumental. The ethos of power becomes less important than its material forms, and the significance of individual legal controls less important than the overall aim to secure order and obedience. The temptation arises to interpret witchcraft prosecutions as just another vehicle of social control, at which point we arc very near to that most anaemic of all explanations—that witches were scapegoats of the hegemonic process.

We need, then, to respect the sense in which the criminality of the witch was the product of political values and relations of power, while avoiding the idea of its incidental utility in achieving ends. It has been argued by Robert Muchembled, for example, that in terms of the new judicial ideology associated with absolutist and Counter-Reformation values, witchcraft was such a heinous offence because it was defined as a form of treason—‘lcsc-majcste divine’. Together with its human equivalent, it therefore stood at the summit of a hierarchy of crimes, ranked according to how seriously they threatened the authority of God and the prince who represented him.[19] As I have repeatedly urged, the theorists of witchcraft ought to have something to tell us on such matters—theorists like Hinrich Rimphoff, who exhorted magistrates to destroy witches by reminding them of the Roman law principle that the supreme magistrate was *legibus solid us.*[20] In what follows I have therefore tried to explore what are normally seen as the non-instrumental aspects of absolute, divine-right rulership, although, as we shall see, this is a distinction which itself turns out to be somewhat misleading. In complement to the institutional and material forms of this notion of political authority, I have stressed its ethical, mystical, and even quasi-magical aspects; what Marc Bloch memorably described as ‘the “marvellous” element in the monarchical idea’.[21] The mystical qualities of traditional rulers and the expressive nature of their power have been the subject both of classic political anthropology and of the recent historiography of early modem courts—much of the latter influenced by Bloch, as well as by Ernst Kantorowicz.[22] The need to emphasize

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[18] See, for example, Heinz Schilling, ‘Between the Territorial State and Urban Liberty: Lutheranism and Calvinism in the County of Lippe’, in Po-Chia Hsia (ed.), *German People,* 263-83.

[19] Robert Muchembled, *Le Temps des supplices: Del’obeissancesouslesroisabsolusXl'—Xl'lll'siecle^Piiis,* 1992), 127-54, drawing on evidence from the north-east of France and the Spanish Netherlands between 1580 and 1640. The argument is recapitulated in id., Le *Roi el la sorciere: L 'Europe des bGchers XV-XVIIC siecle* (Paris, 1993), 30-5,43-8,52-72. See also on this theme, Mandrou, *Magistrals etsorciers* 119 *s " turners,*

“ Rimphoff, *Drachen-Konig,* 50-1.

» Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France,* trans. J. E. Anderson London, 1973) 3; cf. Davtd Starkey, ‘Representation through Intimacy: A Study in the Symbolism of Monarchy and Court Office in Early Modem England’, in I. Lewis (ed.), *Symbols and Sentiments: Cross-Cultural Studies tn Symbol,sm* (London, 1977), 187-224, a valuable attempt to trace the governmental consequences of the symbolism of divine kingship in England

[22] **From the very large classic anthropology of mystical rulership, see A. M. Hocart, *Kingship* (Oxford,** 1927); id., *Kings and Councillors,* ed. and intro. Rodney Needham (Chicago, 1970)- M Fortes Mid E E Evans-Pritchard (eds.), *African Political Systems* (London, 1940), csp. 1-23; Lucy Mair, *Primitive Gov-*

them is equivalent in the field of political history to the need (once expressed by Frances Yates, Allen Debus, and others) to acknowledge a magical and 'hermetic' dimension in early modern science. Without them 'the coming of the modern state' is just as partial and anachronistic a concept as 'the coming of the scientific revolution'. But more important, they enable us to see that witch-hating (if not witch-hunting) was entailed by a certain concept of rulership and not merely contingent upon the general desire to strengthen government and streamline obedience to it. The kind of political authority we shall be tracing was an authority before which it was *necessary'* that demons and witches should give way; this, indeed, was one of its defining aspects. Witches, as Muchcmbled has rightly said, were perceived as the exact antitheses of the judges who pursued them; and both were emblems of theocratic absolute monarchy.[23] Here the link between domination and deviance was internal and conceptual; it was a matter of belief. For this reason I will be appealing not to labelling theory or to theoretical accounts of state-building but to the political sociology of Max Weber. For it was Weber who identified both the general principle that belief constitutes the power to command, and also the particular form of authority most likely to have expressed itself in the prosecution of witches. He left it to historians to trace it in action.

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If demonology appealed finally to the ordering power of the magistrate, this is because it was premissed on a vision of disorder in human affairs. Writers who closed their texts by demanding legal action against witches often opened them by evoking the chaos and disruption that witchcraft either caused or reflected. This established the mood of what they said in between, but it also dictated the kind of political intervention they ultimately sought. The vehemence with which witches were denounced in print stemmed directly, it seems, from the sense of appalling social and material crisis that many early modern authors genuinely felt.[24] More important, the type of magistracy these authors invoked, with its supernatural attributes, bore an intrinsic, rather than merely pragmatic, relationship to the situation they diagnosed; the latter was of such seriousness that only political thaumaturgy could cope with it. To some modern eyes, the diagnosis itself has appeared exaggerated, simplistic, and untypical-just the thing that witch hunters might be expected to say. But they said nothing that cannot be found in other depictions of disorder from the same period. In this, as always, they were orthodox, not exotic. What is important, in any case, is the

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emment (Harmondsworth, 1962), 214-33; E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Ewajr *in Social Anthropology* (Undon, 1962), 66-86. For the recent historiography of 'the symbolic construction of the state', see David Cannadine and Simon Price (eds.), *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in TradHumalSoaeties* (Cambridge, 1987), 4-15; Sean Wilentz (ed.), *Rites of Power: Symbolism Ritual and Politics since the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1985), 1-10; Clifford Geertz, 'History and Anthropology,' *New Literary Hist.* 21 (1989-90), 329-33.

[23] Muchembled, *Temps de supplices*, 127, 168, 185.

[24] [illegible] earl modern Germany of a material crisis wrought by witchcraft, see Lehmann, CK. -'town** rfOrf.'. 110—IS. The judicial defence of order against disorder is a theme of Mandrou's *Magistrals sorcten*; see also Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, 57–60.

character, the force, and the political implications of their perception, not its accuracy or inaccuracy as a matter of report.

This needs emphasizing even in the face of analyses, conducted largely from the perspective of the sociology of deviance, that have seemed, in effect, to corroborate the link between disorder and witch trials. The suggestion is that, between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries, Europe *did* go through a series of changes of such magnitude and relative rapidity that the real lives of its peoples were indeed marked by fundamental dislocation. So traumatized were they by this experience that they readily resorted to prosecuting witches, as a way of explaining the problems and assuaging the anxieties that actually beset them. There are many things wrong with this argument in its usual form, including the lack of any historical particularity or rigour; if anything is exaggerated and simplistic, this surely is.[25] But what matters for the moment is the lack of sufficient attention to the conceptual link between the experience of disorder and the punitive attitude to witches. Instead, this link is established causally, in terms of law-like generalizations concerning the creation of deviants and scapegoats (of whatever kinds) in societies objectively under stress.

The reasons why *witches* were held responsible for disorder, or deemed to be symptomatic of it, were, nevertheless, to do with beliefs; or, if we prefer, with assumptions, attitudes, fears, prejudices, or whatever.[26] And these can only be reached if, once again, the perceptions of those involved are accorded the necessary referential autonomy. Attacks on witchcraft were not the incidental products of social trauma, products that, from a causal point of view, could have taken a quite different form. On the contrary, the very notion of witchcraft was inseparable from how disorder was often conceived and experienced—experienced (as we saw in earlier sections of this book) as the inversion of hierarchical values, or the troubling of nature's normal processes, or the heralding of apocalyptic events, or the consequences of idolatry and sin. In such categorizations, demonism was always already implicated and witches were not far behind.

A good example of an author who launched them onto an ocean of disorders was Johannes Riidinger, who opened a book of ten sermons on the subject by applying St Paul's warning to the Ephesians (Ephesians 5: 15-16: 'See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil') to Saxony in the middle decade of the Thirty Years War. The world, he said, was awash with scandalous behaviour and deeds of the flesh—idolatry, despising of God, disobedience to parents and magistrates, enmity, discord, and anger between fellow human beings, adultery and whoring, stealing and robbing, slandering of kin, mistreatment of heirs, violence, murder, and excess eating and drinking. Men and women lived in a state of malignity and wretchedness, their communities threatened by savage tyranny, their churches threatened by the Turks and the Pope. In this state of affairs which could only have an apocalyptic explanation, it was fitting that magic and witchcraft should be rife everywhere; and necessary that magistrates should bring their office fully to bear on the punishment of evil. Returning to the subject of magic in a later sermon collection, Rudinger returned also to a similar catalogue of evils: heresy and schism in the church, sedition and war in the secular state, and quarrelling and dissension in families.[27]

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[25] See, for example, Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Deviance and Moral Boundaries: Witchcraft, the Occult, Science Fiction, Deviant Sciences and Scientists* (London, 1985), 23-73; Jon Oplingcr, *The Politics of Demonology: The European Witchcraze and the Mass Production of Deviance* (London, 1990), 43-125.

[24] Lehmann,'Persecution ofWitches as Restoration of Order', 109-18.

In England, the coincidence in the 1640s of‘unnatural Wars’ and witchcraft aroused the comments ofjames Howell.[28] In 1645 the royalist newspaper *Mercurius Aulicus* was linking witchcraft (‘an usuall Attendant on former Rebellions’) to parliamentarianism via the discovery of witches in Suffolk and Essex, ‘which Counties from the beginning have becnc oncly the Rebels Quarters’.[29] Following the Restoration, the attempt by Joseph Glanvill and others to find a place for demonology in the ‘new’ science, and thus to strengthen religious orthodoxy against atheism and ‘sadducism’, was strongly influenced by their conviction that the 1640s and 1650s had been a time of appalling chaos?[0] The French civil wars, said a preacher to the politicians of Coventry in 1661, had produced thirty thousand witches and a million atheists; ‘what the Effects of ours hath been upon us in particular we know not, but ’ tis much to be feared, there hath been a greater increase of such Monsters, then good Christians.’[31] And indeed it was in France, in particular, that the experience of religious war gave rise to demonologies initiated by evocations of disorder. Masse opened his *De rimpostureel tromperie des diablesby* lamenting the fact that his age was an ‘iron age’ but also fragile and vulnerable, and broken by social confusion and ‘babylonical’ impiety. Especially awful were the continual wars, civil commotions, and ‘stirrings’ of peoples and nations; ‘divisions, seditions, and rebellions against God and the faith, against kings and princes, against magistrates and the church, in sum, against all lordship and superiority’?[2] Crespet’s dedication letter to the Due de Mayenne set the context for his *Deux Livres* by depicting France in a state of acute disruption through the revolt of religionists hostile to church and monarchy. The eastern empires had already been made a prey to the rage and cruelty of heretics and false Christians and to ‘mahometan’ tyranny; the same would occur in the west?[3] In these respects, French demonology was in line with wider sentiment. In a classic lament for the state of the nation, the advocate of

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[27] Rudinger, *Magia illicita.* 1-5; id., *Deras concionum secunda, de magia illicita. dediMion.* 1-3. For a discussion of the prevention of witchcraft through the maintenance of godly order and morality m the church, the magistracy, and the family, see Gross, *Christlicher Bericht.*

[u] *Hovic\\.EpistolaeHo-Elianae.ii.55\.*

[n] *Mercurius Aulicus.* 10 to 17 Aug. 1645, in *English Revolution Newsbooks,* l. *Oxford Royalist,* vols. l-iv, ed.P. W. Thomas (London, 1971), iv. 93-4.

“ In *Saducismus triumphal,* 62, Glanvill spoke specifically of how in mid-sand late 17th-c. [illegible] ngl^d, sacrilege, rebellion, and witchcraft were ‘accounted but Bugs, and terrible Names, m visible Tittles, Peccadillo’s [*sic*], or Chimera’s [*sic*].’

[31] **John Riland,** ***Elias the second his coming to restore all things: Or Gods way of reforming by restoring ...*** *In M* ***sermons*** (Oxford, 1462), 41; cf. John Douch, *En[illegible]* fer *h.* ***or,*** ***return from*** [illegible] (London, 1660), sig. A3’ (I owe these references to Peter Elmer).

» *Misse, De /'imposture, fos.* 13~. *[11] Crespet, Deux L.vres,* Ep.stre .

politique solutions, Francois de La Noue, insisted that God was punishing France for impiety, social injustice, and the dissolution of the family, the first of these embracing atheism, swearing and blasphemy, and witchcraft. The ‘encrease and toileration’ of such an abomination, he said, was ‘one of the most evident tokens of the subvertion of any Commonwelth’.[34]

The association of witchcraft with political disorder was thus literal; some authors even considered witches and devils as potential challengers to the ruling powers.[35] The theologian Zanchy, for example, wrote that the devil applied all his forces to the destruction (or at least troubling) of the ‘political orders’, especially the magistrate class.[36] The mayor of Windsor was also referring to concrete events when, in 1586, among the threats to England’s Moses, Queen Elizabeth, he listed ‘the enchaunting of witches, the charmings of sorcerers, [and] the presagings and foretellings of soothsayers’. In 1578-9, the discovery in London and near Abingdon of image magic thought to be directed at the Queen led her government to show unusual interest in the witchcraft trials that followed at Windsor.[37] But the association was also symbolic and metaphorical. It became usual to use the words ‘witch’ and ‘witchcraft’ (or ‘enchantment’) when casting political opponents as disturbers of the established order, or when trying to deepen the seriousness of some perceived threat to the public peace.[38] Demonic possession furnished a rich seam of metaphors for describing the distempers of the body politic, as well as a literal record of those in the body human. Lycanthropy, like witchcraft, seemed to belong in an age of tumults and disasters.[3’] It was a commonplace, of course, that the devil was an agent of inquietude, inconstancy, unruliness, and disobedience, a contravener of rules and a destroyer of systems. Excluded from the order of grace, he was bent on subverting the order of nature; ‘just as the divine law wishes all things to be in good order, so the devil has no other aim than to disturb everything, and set all in disorder and confusion.’[40] Inconstancy on a universal scale is a theme that runs through the writings of Pierre de Lan-

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M La Noue, *Polilicke and mihtarie discourses,* 8, and 1—71 on disorder in general; on the sense of disorder among French witchcraft writers, see Pearl, ‘French Catholic Demonologists’, 458-9,466-7.

” See, for example, Daneau, *Dialogue,* sig. Bii'; Boguet, *Examen of Witches,* pp. xxxi-xxxii.

w Zanchy, *De operibus Dei,* cols. 199-200.

” Nichols (ed.), *Progresses ...ofQueen Elizabeth,* ii. 469; Rosen, *Witchcraft,* 83; W. Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to* 77/5(1911; reissued New York, 1965), 27-8.

" The great extent to which these labels (and their associated concepts) were used in England during and after the years of civil war and interregnum are the subject of a paper kindly shown me in advance of publication by Peter Elmer; ‘ “Saints or Sorcerers”: Quakerism, Demonology and the Decline of Witchcraft in Seventeenth-Century England’, in Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester, and Gareth Roberts (eds.), *Witchcraft in Early Modem Europe: Studies in Culture and* ZWie/(Cambridge 1996) 145-79 Anesp full example is the anti-Quaker tract by William Prynne, *The Quakers unmasked, and clearly detected to be the spaum of Romish frogs, Jesuites and Franciscanfryers,* 2nd enlarged edn., (London 1664) first pub 1655. For the use of‘sorciere’ to personify evil throughout France, see Francois Mardtan^L Se *royale* (Saumur, 1625), and for the French Catholic League as ‘Circe’ and ‘Medea’, see Crouzet *Guerriers de Dieu,* ii. 217-20.

” Beauvois de Chauvincourt, *Discours de la lycantropie,* 1-2; Prieur, *Dialogue de la lycanthropie,* fos. 13-15.

[40] Du Preau, *Faux prophetes,* fo. 31*.

ere, two of them being portraits of its calamitous effects/[1] Here was an especially fertile source of idioms of discord and confusion-pandemonium, indeed. The impression, then, is of Europeans who saw disorder and witchcraft as mutually entailed phenomena, permitting multiple transfers of meaning. It was natural to set the scene for treatments of one by invoking the other—natural, that is, for Shakespeare or Ronsard to let demonism introduce disorder, and for writers on witchcraft to let disorder introduce demonism.

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[41] De Lancrc, *Tableau de Tinconstance des mauvais anges et demons;* id., *Tableau de Tinconstance et instability de toutes choses.* Cf. Boucher, *Couronne mystique,* 409-14.

37

Magistrates and Witches

> For rulers arc not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.
>
> (Romans 13:3-4)

> God's command to all those who wield the sword in His place is: 'Do not suffer witches to live.'... Listen you, who by God's disposition preside over the government of the commonwealth and restrain grave sins by pursuing them with fire and sword, to what the word of God sets down: 'Do not suffer witches to live.'... It is not I who says this; the divine law says it, out of God's own mouth. 'Do not suffer witches to live.' The law of the Church proclaims it, the Imperial law proclaims it... what more do you want?
>
> (Friedrich Forner, *Panoplia armaturae Dei)*

Of all the voices adopted by writers on witchcraft none, surely, was more clamorous or more explicit than the one in which the power of the secular magistrate was called down on the heads of magicians and witches. At least there is no mistaking the drift of Bishop Forner's remarks or these by the Jesuit Jeremiah Drexel, preacher to Maximilian I of Bavaria:

> There arc, nevertheless, most unzealous Christians, not worthy of the name, who strongly oppose the idea that this kind of weed should be rooted out in any way, lest, as they say, innocence be violated. O enemies of the honour of God! Does not the divine law most expressly command: 'Suffer not witches to live'? I appeal most urgently and by divine command to leaders, rulers, princes, and kings: do not suffer witches to live. By fire and sword this worst plague of men is to be destroyed. This weed is to be uprooted, so that it does not flourish so much, which alas is what we see happening and grieve at. Remove the ungodly, lest the infection spread, bum the public enemies of God, lest they turn this world into the kingdom of hell. To you o princes and kings is committed the sword for the punishing of dangerous crimes by just penalties, but what is more dangerous than to be the sworn enemy of the deity? All wizards and witches are the professed and sworn enemies of God. O prince, o king, let not witches live.[1]

Somewhat less trenchant exhortations to the German princes and magistrates appear in the set of propositions on witchcraft which Johann Hofmann dedicated to Johann Ernest, Duke of Saxony, in 1636; in the vast survey of witch-trial procedures by

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[1] Jeremiah Drexel, *Gazophylacium Christi eleemosyna quam in aula ... Maximiliani ... explicavit el latine scripsit Hieremias Drexelius* (Munich, 1638), 94.

Heinrich von Schultheis, the jurist and councillor to the Elector of Cologne, who in 1634 was Archbishop Ferdinand of Bavaria; and in Hinrich Rimphoff's *Drachen-Konig* (1647), where the dedicatee was Johann Oxenstierna, son of the Swedish chancellor Axel Oxenstierna (to whom Hermann Samson had earlier dedicated his witchcraft sermons).[2] The Emperor himself (Maximilian I) was encouraged to root out witchcraft from his dominions by the Benedictine abbot Johannes Trithemius, following a conversation they had in Boppard in 1508? In France, where many advocates of witchcraft prosecution thought that the judiciary was too lenient to witches, similar entreaties were directed at the Due de Mayenne by Pierre Crespet, at Henri III by Pierre Node, at Henri IV by Daniel Drovin, and at Louis XIII by Pierre de Lancrc as well as by Jean Le Normant and Jean Boucher.[4] Invitations to the witch hunt were altogether less insistent in England. But Perkins's demonology, which advocated the death penalty even for 'white' witchcraft, was dedicated by Thomas Pickering to Sir Edward Coke. And Thomas Cooper encouraged the mayor and corporation of Chester and the magistrates of the County Palatine (as well as James I) to continue the good work by arguing that God had 'gratiously afforded the blessing of Govcrnement as a speciall means to discover witchcraft'. As a general restorative against the crime, he advocated the 'conscionable Execution of Justice'.[5]

Appeals of this sort lie scattered in abundance through the literature of witchcraft, whether directed at individuals, ruling bodies, or princes and magistrates in general. Given the circumstances, they seem to require little comment. If anything, they have been the occasion of value judgements about the morality and (in some absolute sense) the justice of the witch trials, rather than suggesting enquiries into what was meant by justice at the time or why it was invoked in particular terms. Yet even though these may not have been made explicit, such statements were never innocent of juridical assumptions concerning what warranted the actions of judges and magistrates, what force the law had to touch certain offences, what, ultimately, sanctioned the implementation of justice, and so on. And since, eventually, they must have rested on a conception of authority, it is difficult to see them as politically naive cither. It seems reasonable to suppose, therefore, that in this particular area demonology was informed by some sort of political theory—indeed, by a theory of government. Seen in these terms even apparently casual arguments begin to take on significance; for instance, Neils Hemmingsen's resort to Platonic precepts to justify the magistrate's involvement in matters of magic;[6] or the jibes that those who opposed vigorous witch prosecutions or disbelieved in spirits were followers of Machiavelli, or, like him, 'scoffers' and 'mockers' in matters of public morality, or plain 'politicians'.[7] But undoubtedly the most insistent theme was that of the divine character of magistracy and justice. Despite the fact that the appeals we are considering were largely addressed to secular rulers, it was the godliness of their office and hence their natural and total enmity to things demonic that were the main issues. 'I would to God', says Theophilus in Lambert Daneau's witchcraft dialogue, 'that those men to whom God hath geven the authoritie to make Lawes, and execute Justice, had taken such order by theyr lawes, that every Judge should have absolute and full authoritie within his circuitc, territory, and precinct, to make away and put to death, these perjured runnagates from the Fayth, and most wicked kynd of men.'[8]

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[2] Johann Hofmann, *Apologia principum, in qua processus in causa sagarum contmetur,et maleficorum argumenta reftutantur* (Erfurt, 1636), sigs. B3' (proposition 2), C4'-D1'(proposition 7); Schultheis,zta-Jahrliche *Instruction,* 1-11, see also 489-503; RimphofF, *Drachen-Konig,5(I-\. CL Dtversi tractatus,* 3-7, ded. by the publisher Constantin Munich to the judges, magistrates and lawyers of Cologne.

[3] Trithemius, *Liber octo quaestionum,* 292-4; Trithemius wrote his *Antipalus maleficwrum* (also completed in 1508) for Prince Joachim of Brandenburg.

[4] Crespet, *Deux Livres*, 'Epistre' and see also fo. 316'; No* so r *Declamation,* to Henri III; Drovin, *Vengeances divines,* dedication, sigs, aii'-av'; de Lancre, *L 'Incredulité*, Letter to King, 1–9; for Lc Normant and Boucher, see above, Ch. 25. On the complaints of judicial lemency, see Pearl, French CatholicDemonologists',464-6. *n it*

[5] Cooper, *Mystery of witch-craft,* 280-1,294; and see above, Ch. 25.

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A characteristic discussion appears in *Von Zattberey und Zatiberern, griindlicher Bericht,* which the Calvinist preacher Anton Practorius published first in 1598 under the pseudonym Johann Scultctus. Practorius disbelieved the more sensational aspects of witchcraft and was highly critical of the conduct of prosecutions, but he accepted in principle that demonic crimes were justly punished. He therefore rejected the view that, in these matters, the grace of the New Testament had obliterated the law of the Old. In answer to the question whether secular magistrates should deal with this particular vice, as well as other public misdemeanours, he insisted that it was in the very nature of their calling that they should:

> For God has placed them to rule over his earthly kingdom, that they might diligently defend and enlarge it and vigorously prevent and remove all disorder, hindrance, and damage, and restore it again. And hence, that they may be reminded of all this, God has honoured them in Scripture with such names as Gods, Kings, or Sovereigns, Judges, Powers, Servants of God and Orders.

Witchcraft was not, after all, just another common vice, but one of the greatest obstacles to the Christian polity, and the magistrate who neglected it would be undermining the very conception of his office as a divine stewardship. That public magistrates were custodians of both Tables of the Mosaic laws—that they were *custos utriusque tabulae*—and avengers of their infringement had been symbolized, explained Praetorius, in the election of the kings of Israel, who, from Joshua to Joash (following the injunctions of Deuteronomy, 27) had been presented with the book of Laws at the moment of entering office. But magic and witchcraft not only flouted the first and third Commandments, they threatened the entire body of these laws. Hence the

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[4] Hemmingsen, */ldmonitio,* sig. N6ʳ.

[7] RimphofT, *Drachen-Konig,* 18-19,419-20; [Thomas Bromhall], cd. and trans., *Treatise of specters; or, an history of apparitions, oracles ... with dreams, visions* (London, 1658), 344-5 (a compilation volume; here Bromhall was translating from an unidentified French treatise confuting sadducism and epicureanism); Anon., *Processus juridicus contra sagas et veneficos, 51* (for authorship, see Lea *Material,* ii 688-9). On the implications of'Machiavellism' for demonology, see below, Ch. 39.

[1] Daneau, *Dialogue*, sig. Lvʳ.

paramount duty of the secular authorities to counter them as vigorously as possible?

The direct source for these arguments lay in St Paul's Epistle to the Romans 13. In a text cited and discussed more frequently than any other in the contemporary debates about political authority and obligation, witchcraft authors found not only the classic Pauline doctrine of obedience to divinely ordained powers but the idea that in discharging his divine office the godly magistrate must uphold the moral law. In the 1430s, the *dauphinois* judge Claude Tholosan was already applying this to the prosecution of witches and the exaltation of a princely power 'knowing no superior'.[10] Thereafter, the image of the sword borne in vengeance became one of the most pervasive in demonology; critics of witch trials, like Friedrich von Spec, acknowledged its appeal.[11] It clearly inspired Drexel's plea to Europe's princely classes, but it is also found in Hofmann and Rimphoff and in other German witchcraft writers like Samuel Meier (addressing Frederick II of Denmark), David Aledcr, and Konrad Hartz.[12] As a threat to witches it was inscribed over a woodcut by Lucas Cranach, depicting an execution of four of them in Wittenberg in 1540.[13] The author who described the arrest and trial of Jean de Bonnevaux at Montmorillon in Poitou in 1599 opened his *Discours sommaire* by warning that God had granted 'the sharp sword of justice' to judges and magistrates so that they might root out such evil.[14] Alternatively, Romans 13 could be glossed as a threat concerning official responsibilities; and here too Practorius was only expressing a general view. In Binsfeld's *Tractatus* judicial negligence or tardiness in the matter of witchcraft was contrasted with the sort of direct action shown by Phinehas who (in Numbers 25: 7-9) zealously impaled fornicators and idolaters. The children of Belial, the chopping-block of every early modern moralist, were also said to have been justly smitten for their idolatry (Deuteronomy 13:13—16). But Binsfeld argued that the crimes of modern magicians and witches were yet more serious, the indifference of magistrates yet more culpable, and the wrath of God that much more justified.[15] Martin Del Rio too thought that this was a text that admonished rulers as much as their citizens; he also warned against mildness in extirpating witches on the grounds that the threat to Christian society and the affront to God would be weighed so heavily against those in authority that their destruction must result.[16]

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* Practorius, *Von Zauberey und Zauberem,* 128-65, quotation at 131-2. For the same argument about the two Tables in a witchcraft context, sec Frisius, K*on dess TeuJJels Nebelkappen,* dedication (to the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt), 215; Ankarloo, *Trolldomsprocessema,* 327.

[10] Claude Tholosan, 'Ut magorum ct malcficiorum errores', in id., *Quintus liberfachurenoiym.* repr. m Pierrette Paravy, 'A propos de la gencse médievale des chasses aux sorcieres: Le Traitc de Claude Tholosan, juge Dauphinois (vers 1436)', *Melanges de fecolefianfaue de Rome. Moyen Age-Temps ModcrnesJX* (1979), 373-9, and commentary *loc. cit.* 344-7.

" [Spec], *Cautio eriminalis,* 11-12, see also 61-2, and for Spec's own appeal to the dtvtmty of the

'H'^iSSmann and RimphofTsec n. 2 above; Lohmeier, 'Die Hexenschrift des Samuel **Meigerius',** 46-9; Meder, *Acht hexenpredigten,* fos. 107'-8'; Hartz, *Tractatus* ***criminalis de veneficarum inquisitione,*** **36** (Hartz nevertheless advocated several procedural safeguards m wttc , ... **hcraft cases). For further Protestant** examples, see the remarks of the Hanau minister, Nicolaus **Krug, and of Abraham** Saur thc Harburg buyer, h **Paulus, *Hexenwahn*** *.nJ Hexcnproztu, n.lT.* KUmjer, ***De magia illicita,*** 241-86 For the Catholic equivalent, see Faehineus, f *Db* ***factis,*** *junJK.. ml'Jw « W.* **sig. A2'. nsum** ■ *W* *juris,* 131-2; Agricola, *Crundllicher Bericht,* 82-4, and see also sig. a5 .

[11] Reproduced in *Hiustcin. Martin Luthers Stetlung.* • *T* **187** 126-9

“ *Anon., Discours sommaire des sortileges, S.* » Bmsfeld, TmW 126-9.

Underlying both the threat of punishment and the obligation to punish was Paul's conception of public office as a divine 'ministry', an idea that Praetorius reinforced by drawing on its Old Testament equivalents in the Book of Wisdom 6: 3—4 and Psalms 82:6 ('I have said, Ye are gods:'). Node could therefore appeal (from Romans) to the French judicial and seigneurial classes to rid France of magic and demonism on the grounds that among mortals they held the place of the sovereign judge and lord of lords. Only they could wield the sovereign remedy of the sword of justice which God had given them that they might cut out the rotten members from the body politic.[17] David Mcder, the last of whose eight witchcraft sermons of 1615 dealt with the responsibilities of the secular magistrate, opened it by saying that they all stemmed from the Pauline doctrine that he acted 'in God's place'. Another German Lutheran, Johann Ellinger, closed his chapter on the death penalty for witchcraft by citing all the laws of God against it and quoting the Book of Wisdom 6: 1-7 at the rulers he expected to enforce them.[18] The Danish theologian Niels Hemmingsen had spoken of the deification of the magistrate in 1575, and the Italian Candido Brognolo was to remark on it again in 1668.[19] In early sixteenth-century Castile, Ciruelo demanded punishment for witches because 'those who hold office from God on earth are more strongly obligated to protect the honor of God than that of themselves and to punish very severely all those who sin against the honor of God.'[20] The supreme injunction in Exodus, it was also often said, was no mere positive law but a divine decree, conformable to natural law; those who acted as the anointed instruments of divine justice could hardly disregard it. This was particularly popular with Protestants who, otherwise, had serious scruples concerning the validity of the penal and civil legislation of Moses in the age of the gospel. 'Princes', wrote the preachers of Strasburg in a memorandum on witchcraft of April 1538, 'administer not their own judgement, but that of the Lord and they ought therefore to follow His Law.'[21]

One of the most extravagant statements of these ideas came from the provincial of the Capuchin order in Normandy, Father Esprit de Bosroger, in his lengthy account of the possession of Madeleine Bavent at Louviers between 1643 and 1646. His *La*

" Del Rio, *Disquisitionum magicarum,* 537-8. " Node, *Declamalion,* 46-50.

" Meder, JrA/ *hexenpredigten,* fos. 107'-8'; Ellinger, *Hexen Coppel,* 55, see also dedication.

*' Hemmingsen, *rldmonitio,* sig. N6'; Candido Brognolo, *Alexicacon hoc est opus de maleficiis ac morbis maleficis* (Venice, 1668), 35-6.

[20] Ciruelo, *Treatise,* 75.

[21] Janssen, *of the German* xvi. 275-6;
Capito, and Cf.
magos, in id.,

Pieté ajjligee (1652) concludes with a panegyric on magistracy—in effect, that of the par/ewent of Rouen—during which he defends the proposition that magic and witchcraft are capital crimes. Those who deny this are not merely guilty of lack of faith, religion, and piety—they’ lack a true conception of justice; but the provincial magistrates who seek to destroy magic are the ‘tutelary Gods’ of France. Despite the elevated tone it is impossible not to notice the influence of St Paul:

> Resplendent on the fleurs-de-lis, these noble spirits rejoice that, like God, they are resisted in the faithful execution of their duties, when, inspired by a zeal for justice, they pass judgements with severity. Even the most-just and most-holy* Deity* is not acknowledged by* all, nor respected in his infallible judgements. And it is a wonderful advantage to them, that, seated on the fleurs-de-lis and, like so many royal eagles, gazing intently on the splendour of God, his reason, and his immutable justice, they bear the thunderbolts not of Jupiter but of the living God, and hurl them down on the heads of criminals; and that their judgements, approved of by good men, are harsh and unwelcome only to the wicked and the wanton... The magistrates and the *parlements* do not wield the sword of the prince nor the glory of God in vain.[22]

A final case of a discussion of these issues at some length is that by Hinrich Rimphoff, Lutheran preacher and superintendent in the Bishopric of Verden. Rimphoff devotes a section of his *Drachen-König* to a refutation of the argument that, following the parable of the tares, the magistrate ought not to pre-empt God’s own final judgements on the wicked or run the risk of taking innocent lives. This is a view that Rimphoff associates with the ‘witch patrons’ but also with Anabaptist scruples about bearing the sword and shedding blood—a significant contrast to the enthusiasm for magisterial action among the witchcraft writers of the state churches.[23] Private men, Rimphoff concedes, are rightly subject to these reservations. But Romans 13 shows that wielding the sword against malefactors must, since the authority behind it is divinely constituted, be a godly act. Obedience, likewise, should be a matter of conscience, not prudence, sanctioned by the threat of damnation and not merely by human ordinances. It is in fact a law of nature that the magistrate should take life in cases of serious crime; otherwise the values underlying society would soon vanish. Like the surgeon severing the diseased limb or the gardener uprooting unwanted growths, he should burn witches for the common good.[24]

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However full the exposition or aggressive the tone, nothing can disguise the fact that these were commonplaces of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century political thought. There can be no doubt that, as a group, witchcraft authors relied on the conception of political and judicial authority to which many, perhaps most, of their fellow Europeans also subscribed, a point neatly encapsulated in the two works which the Lutheran pastor Ludwig Milichius contributed to the genre of the *TafllWl.* His

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[22] Esprit de Bosroger, *Pieté affligee*, 445–8 (quotation at 446).

[23] For the magistrate’s duty to punish witchcraft, in a specifically anti-Anabaptist context, see Heinrich Bullinger, *Der Widertöufferen ursprung, fürgang,* S.Mn *wäsen, fürnemme und gemeine irer leer Artickel* (Zürich, 1560), fo. 174'.

[24] Rimphoff, *Drachen-Konig,* 225-50.

Der Zauber Teujfel(\563) concludes with conventional advice to the godly magistrate concerning the punishment of witchcraft, while his *Schrap Teufel* (1567) opens with equally conventional advice to the citizen (based in part on Romans 13) on what is lawfully due to the ruler.[25] The idea that rulers and magistrates owed their superiority to their possession of God-endowed powers was not the only justification for authority in this period, nor, in the long run, was it the one which survived. Yet, despite the inroads made by Machiavellism, *raison d'état,* and contract theory, it remained, during the height of the witchcraft prosecutions, the most conventional. This ordinariness might seem to detract from the significance of its appearance in the pages of the witchcraft theorists. But, even if there was nothing more to be said on the subject, this would not be the case. For it is the discovery of just this sort of conventionality that enables us to account for their views without resorting to either condemnation or special pleading. The important point is that the punishment of witchcraft was justified ultimately in terms of notions of authority that were very commonly brought to bear when the maintenance of the social and moral order was at issue.

Even so, there is more to be said. For witchcraft was clearly not just another crime, and in discussing the proper judicial response to it authors were not merely replicating the moral injunctions of the Old Testament and the political theories of St Paul. Its very character as an offence involved aspects of the divinity of magistracy that, in other crimes, were only of coincidental importance. As a result, witchcraft writers were able to make a distinctive contribution to political theories concerning authority. It was to be expected that they should insist that it was the most noxious of all crimes or even a summation of them. But the view that it was the essence of false religion made it repugnant to the godly magistrate in a singular way. It was perpetrated in the very name of anti-divinity; it was authorized, so to speak, in such a way as to make it exactly antithetical to those who wielded the authority of God. According to Pierre de Lancre, judges were obliged 'in God and conscience' to believe in witchcraft and to put witches to death; they were vehicles of royal justice and kings were 'sacred persons'.[26] There was no sin in the world, wrote Sebastien Michaëlis, 'that doth more transplant the Crownes and Kingdomes of the Princes of the Earth, especially of Christian Princes, then to tollerate by any indulgence or connivencie whatsoever, an impiety so derogatory from God, and Christ his Sonne, and to let it spread in the middest of the Church.'[27] Niels Hemmingsen likewise argued that the giving of divine titles to judges and magistrates signified that their primary
maintenance of the true religion, something which
tion of the false, in which magic and
who sought to take away their

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accidents of magistracy but its very essence: ‘He who takes away the repressing by these laws and punishments, of the open profanation of the divine name, destroys the principal office of the magistrate.’ Those who presided in witchcraft cases should regard themselves as ministers of God, exercising not their own but divine judgements.[28]

What many authors like Hemmingsen were suggesting, in effect, was not simply that magistrates had a divine duty to confront and defeat witchcraft, but that *only* by confronting and defeating witchcraft—witchcraft rather than some other crime—could they demonstrate and authenticate their role as God’s lieutenants on earth. A confrontation with witches was an encounter with those possessed of powers of apparently similar strength and supernatural origin but in fact derived from a morally tainted and inferior source. A victorious outcome was thus a forceful indication of political legitimacy. The place of witchcraft in these early modern texts was, indeed, akin to that of sorcery in Late Antiquity, as described in a famous essay by Peter Brown—a necessity in terms of images of political power: ‘for to survive sorcery was to prove, in a manner intelligible to all Late Roman men, that the vested power of the emperor, his *fatum,* was above powders of evil directed by mere human agents.’[29] It was constitutive of later Christian theology, and thus of demonology, to enhance demonic powers to the highest plausible degree, in order to maximize the countermanding authority of God; in this way, demonology was the best possible guarantee against atheism. ‘Since the power of the devil is so great,’ wrote one typical Protestant authority, ‘the power of God which bridles and governs him must be still greater.’[30] The same principle was applied to politics. Like the Late Roman sorcerers, demons and witches became the best possible antagonists of those who claimed power by divine right. Their defeat could only result from supernatural, not merely physical superiority, and it was precisely supernatural superiority that was being claimed. For the claim to be genuine, the defeat of witches must ensue.

Witchcraft authors were fond of biblical examples of rulers who banished magic from their kingdoms, the most favoured case being Josiah, who put away ‘the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem’.[31] They were equally likely to cite those who failed in this duty and, therefore, disqualified themselves from office—notably Saul, who, having ‘put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land', was nevertheless capable of consulting the spirit of Samuel, summoned by the necromancer of Endor (1 Samuel 28: 3,7-25).[32] But by far the most significant occasions were those when rulers, prophets, or apostles directly confronted magicians in order to show their superior strength in performingmiracles. In the New Testament, St Paul accused the Jewish sorcerer Elymas of being a 'child of the devil' and then blinded him; while St Peter, faced with the flying feats of Simon Magus, cast him to the ground by the simple invocation of Christ's name.[33] In the Old Testament, in the most influential case of all, Moses emerged victorious over the magicians of Pharaoh in a competition for power that included turning rods into serpents and rivers into blood, as well as plaguing the Egyptians with swarms of frogs and lice—at which point the magicians conceded defeat.

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[28] Hemmingsen, *Admonitio,* sigs, N6', N8'-O1'; cf. Esprit de Bosroger *Picte affligée,* 376. For a discussion of the difference between witchcraft and ordinary crimes like highway robbery, see Schultheis, *Aussführliche Instruction*, 18–19.

[29] Peter Brown, ‘Sorcery, Demons and the Rise of Christianity: from Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages’, in id., *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (London, 1972), 125–6; Brown adds that a ‘sorcerer’s attack? indeed, is an obligatory preliminary, in biographies of the time, to demonstrating the divine power that protected the hero.*

[30] Martyr, *Trois Questions*, 290.

[31] 2 Kings 23: 24; cf. Zehner, *Fünff Predigten von den Hexen*, 46–7; Massé, *De l’imposture*, fos. 125ᵛ–9ʳ (citing also Ferdinand of Spain for closing the schools of magic and ‘occult philosophy’ in Toledo); Gaule, *Cases of conscience*, 88–90 (arguing that the authority of governors in Church and State in discovering witches was ‘from God’).

In the New Testament examples, the parallels to be drawn between apostles and magistrates were in the nature of analogies. And in this indirect way the authority of Christ could also be assimilated to the pattern. Scbastien Michaelis wrote that 'as our Saviour by his comming into the world, did drive away and cast out the Devils, so his pleasure was, that their speciall attendants and worshippers [i.e. witches] should by earthly Princes be bannished out of their Dominions: which action did belong unto the externall Seatc of Justice'.[34] But in the case of Moses the inspiration was direct, for Moses had given the Israelites their first political forms ('rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens': Exodus 18:21) as well as their legal codes. And it was from one such code, the so-called 'judicial' legislation, that writers on demonology took the text on which many of their reflections on magistracy were based: 'thou shall not suffer a witch to live' (Exodus 22: 18). Here, therefore, the godly magistrate of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries could be considered the direct successor of Moses and a wielder of comparable powers.

In these various ways, the sorcerer, the magician, and, eventually, the witch took on the role of possessors of profane, or, as Heiko Oberman terms it, 'illegitimate' charisma.[35] Against them the supernatural powers of rulers might be tested to see whether they were genuine (i.e. sacred) or spurious. For the contest to serve this function the participants had to be pushed to each extreme of the spectrum of legitimacy. It was always insisted that Elymas and Simon Magus (and in retrospect the magicians of Pharaoh) derived their powers of sorcery from a demonic pact. The important point here, and one central to what has been called the 'combat myth' in the narratives of the ancient Near East and the origins of Christianity,[36] was that only the purely demonic could serve as an appropriate foil for the purely divine. Peter

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[32] Michaelis, *Discourse of spirits,* 67-9; cf. id., *Admirable historic,* dedication to the French queen regent, sig. A2~, and see also sig. Cl', 219-20, where Michaelis praised Henri IV for disregarding astrologers and magicians; Node, *Declamation,* 49; Bamaud, *Miroir*

" Crespet, *Deux* fos. Fomer, *Panoplia*

19:

Brown has said of saints too that they ‘positively needed sorcerers’ in the literature and life of Late Antiquity; thus, it was just when the primacy of St Peter in the Roman Church was being established that his defeat of Simon Magus enjoyed widespread currency?' In the early modern centuries, the point was made in the most explicit manner by the Restoration natural philosopher George Sinclair. What would follow, he asked, if Pharaoh’s magicians had not been assisted by demons but instead, as many sceptics alleged of all witchcraft, their feats rested merely on legerdemain and cozening?

> First, that poor Jugling Fellows, were able to contend and debate with Moses, who was immediately assisted by the power of God. Secondly, that this victory, which Moses obtained over these men, was but mean and small, not to be boasted of, which is the basest Derogation to the glory of that victory, and the vilest reproach against the God of Israel, and his Servant Moses, that ever was heard of.

No, insisted Sinclair, for reasons essential to the politics of demonology; the conflict was a worthy one, between ‘the Kingdom of light, and the Kingdom of darkness, and the evil Spirits thereof’?[8]

Yet there were ways of seeing awkward similarities between biblical and apostolic contestants too. To the pagan spectator (as Edward Peters has pointed out) the confrontations in Acts must have seemed like contests between, not with, magicians, to see who was the stronger; early Christians (and, of course, Christ too) were, after all, accused by their critics of practising magic?[9] This is a ‘stranger’s’ perspective that appeals to the modern political sociologist or anthropologist, familiar with trials of magical strength in societies by no means dissimilar to those of the ancient Near East. But early modern writers themselves were well aware of it, even if they could not always see its implications. Nodé, for example, reported that Nero had expelled Simon Magus *and* St Peter from Rome thinking that both were ‘enchanters’, while his clerical colleague Massé admitted that Simon Magus must have thought that he was faced simply by more powerful demons than his own, to want to buy them out.[40] The Englishman James Mason glimpsed more clearly the apostles’ dilemma when they were acknowledged (Acts 16:16-17) by the female diviner and soothsayer of Philippi:

> The which when Paul perceived, and fore-seeing the inconvenience that might arise therby, to take away al occasion of misdeeming, he commanded the spirit to depart out of the said Damsel; making therby (as it were) an open profession of the enmitie betwixt Satan and him, and so of the contrariety of both their doctrines, and of the endes of the same.[41]

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[17] Peter Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (London, 1978), 22; cf. id., Sorcery, Demon’ s and the Rise of Christianity’, 135-6, for illuminating examples of the combat motif in early Christian demonology.

“ Sinclair, *Satan ’r invisible world.* To the Reader, p. xxyin, see also p. xx; cf. Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus.* 294, on the further possibility, inherent in scepticism, that Moses and Aaron might be seen as having simply ‘more Cunning and Dexterity in the Art of Juggling.’

” Peters *The Magician the Witch, and the Law.* 3-4,7-8; cf. Kieckhefer, *Magic.* 34-6.

« Nodé, *Declamation,* 41; Mrt *D. /'«;»»«. k. »f -. ct.* Valdwrama, *HW." t'.c'.l'.* bb. 3, 311-12.

[41] Mason, *Anatomic of torcerie.* 33, see also 46.

This is one of those statements that reveals a lot more than it was intended to as much, perhaps, as Mason’s remark that the holy prophets of the Old Testament were given to the Israelites as substitutes for the ‘sorcerers, witches, inchanters, [and] necromancers’ from whom pagan peoples normally sought help.[42] In Christian tradition, the encounters we are considering were seen as emblems of opposed powers, a perspective which readily embraced the political and judicial sphere. But their potency in this respect stemmed from the fact that the powers involved were simultaneously both very different and very similar. Some kind of reciprocity had to be present; the very notion of a trial of strength demands both similarity and difference between the participants. But in Mason’s account, Paul had to rescue a sense of the latter from an appearance of the former, as if apostolic miracles had been ‘misdeemed’ to be just higher magic. It seems that, like the notion of inversion encountered at the outset of this book, the notion of contestation was structurally ambivalent in demonology—and, indeed, for much the same reasons. It worked simultaneously both to strengthen political orthodoxy by depicting rulership as a victorious expression of eternal and unchallengeable values, and also to undermine that orthodoxy by implying that rulers might be only more successful versions of those they defeated. There is no more convincing image of the rightness of power than victory in battle over an evil counterpart. Portrayed in this role, early modern magistrates, like their biblical analogues (and their clerical contemporaries), benefited from dealings with the demonic. Their objectively superior authority as the vehicles of God’s political will on earth was confirmed, and the possibility of alternative versions of magistracy, together with the very notion of rulership as something arbitrarily made, was disallowed. On the other hand, those who prevailed over (what they dismissed as) magic ran the risk of being identified with it, at least in kind. Were they victorious because they were sacred, or were they called ‘sacred’ because they were victorious? Was magical authority a debased form of legitimate authority; or ‘true’ rulership merely a name for the most appealing form of magic?

These were potentially unsettling questions, since the connotations of ‘magical’ included illusion, trickery, and mystification. That political thaumaturgy might be different only in degree from any other sort implied some sort of charlatanry among those who claimed that it was different in kind. An alternative argument was to derive legitimacy not from transcendental values at all but from the successful possession and exercise of power. From this point of view, demonic opponents ceased to be objectively important as challengers to rulers, and their crimes came to seem more like projections made by those who disliked competition. It thus became possible to demystify political transcendentalism and relativize the forms of deviance against which it set itself—to argue, in effect, that witchcraft was no more myth.

* * *

These problems—problems arising from what might be called the adverse affinities between mystical politics and magical power—run through the chapters that follow. As in the case of inversion, however, we should not exaggerate the tensions caused by contestation as a representational idiom. For the most part, it helped witchcraft authors to convey the rightness of witch trials, while the danger in implying that magistrates exercised only a higher magic remained concealed. This is the case with one further clement of the contest motif, which deserves a chapter of its own: the suggestion that, in exercising true authority, the bearers of it were ultimately immune from the influence of the contrary forces against which they battled. This is a notion that derives from the general principle of the inviolability of the sacred and is at least implied both by the ability of the charismatic figures in the Bible to withstand the resistance offered by demonic sorcerers, and by St Paul’s insistence in Romans 13 that ‘whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God’. In the Europe of the witch trials, it was to find expression in the widely shared view that when witches were apprehended by the judicial authorities, or their agents, they promptly lost all their powers.’Of all the various ingredients of early modern thought about witchcraft this is certainly one of the most striking. And yet it also has profound implications for the way we understand conceptions of magistracy in the same period. Of overriding importance is the fact that it was not associated with any other crime—only inviolability from *witchcraft* serving to drive home the arguments for the godliness of the magistrate’s office. On this latter issue, an issue at the very heart of the debates about political authority in early modern Europe, writers on demonology were thus uniquely qualified to speak.

38

Inviolability

> Ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's.
>
> (Deuteronomy 1:17)

> The power of all Witches is restrained by the authoritie of the Magistrate. For though, if a private person detain them, they may either hurt or escape, yet if once the magistrate hath arrested them, Satans power ceaseth, in being not now able to hinder and defraud the Justice of the Almightie.
>
> (Thomas Cooper, *Mystery of witch-craft)*

As early as the 1430s the Dominican Johannes Nider reported in his *Formicarius* that witches had confessed that 'by the mere fact that they are seized by the officials of public justice, all power of witchcraft *(maleficorum)* is immediately taken away'. In view of what will emerge later concerning the power of touch, it is worth noting the episode with which Nider illustrated this point. The Bernese magistrate Peter von Greyerz had instructed his men to apprehend a notorious magician from Boltigen in the diocese of Lausanne. But their hands shook so much and they were faced with such a foul stench that they dared not approach him and abandoned the attempt. The judge's response was that the arrest could still be made, 'because, touched by the hand of public justice *(publica tactus iusticia)* he would lose all the strength of his wickedness'.[1] Our reactions to this story ought not to be blunted by doubts about its authenticity or about wishful thinking on the part of magistrates. Whether or not it actually occurred is irrelevant either to the cogency of the principle at stake or to the literalness with which this principle was thought to work. For these matters the episode was a simple but perfect vehicle, and as such it was widely cited in the demonologies and anthologies of devil-tales of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[2]

One reason for this was that it found its way first into the *Malleus maleficarum,* alongside the general statement that witches could only injure those who were 'destitute of Divine help'. Amongst those who were not, wrote Kramer and Sprenger, were 'those who administer public justice against witches, or prosecute them in any public official capacity'.[3] In 1536 the Italian Paolo Grillando, doctor of canon and civil laws, *auditor* of criminal causes in Arezzo, and a judge witchcraft trials, also wrote that

> Demons are not able with their powers to reach against human justice and to free captives from the hands of public justice, since God does not permit it... otherwise it would follow that the Devil's power would be above the Divine and that justice would utterly disappear and all laws would be overturned, which God in no way allows.[4]

Later in the century the same principle found its way into the textbooks on witchcraft by Jean Bodin, Nicolas Remy, and Henri Boguet, all of whom were involved in actual trials. Bodin thought that the most powerful magic in the world would not work against the officials of the law, and reported that a witch had told him personally that 'from the time she was in the hands of Justice, the Devil had no more power over her'.[5] Remy cited cases of physical incfficacy, where especially noxious poisons were harmless to judges but fatal to all others. He recorded the case of Jacqueline Zaluctia from Lorraine, who in 1588 confessed to having pestered her personal demon for revenge against a magistrate who had imprisoned and tortured her, only to be met with the excuse: 'I openly admit that all my attempts come to nothing. For they arc in [God's] guardianship and protection who alone can oppose my designs.' According to Remy, another Lorraine witch had exclaimed to him, 'It is well for you judges that we can do nothing against you', while a third argued that 'demons are impregnated and seared with an especial hatred towards those who put in operation the law against witches, but it is in vain that they attempt or seek to wreak any vengeance against them.'[6] As for Boguet, he repeated what he regarded (in 1602) as the standard view concerning the inviolability of officers of justice; 'all are agreed that no witch, however wicked, can do harm to their persons'. Satan himself, he added, held them in fear and dread.[7]

Boguet was certainly correct about the currency of these ideas among the witchcraft writers of early modern Europe. The immunity of magistrates from demonism, and the consequent loss of power of the witch once apprehended, are found in the Spaniards Pedro de Valderrama and Martin Del Rio, the Italians Bartolommeo Spina, Silvestro Da Prierio (Mazzolini), and Giovanni D'Anania, the Germans Friedrich Forner, Franciscus Agricola, Johann Hofmann, and Michael Freudius, and the Frenchmen Sebastien Michaelis and Pierre Crespet.[8] They appear in the manuals of the jurists,[9] and, as we shall see, they were confirmed by the exorcists. They were being debated in disputations at the university of Ingoldstadt in the 1590s, and they were still being examined in academic dissertations at Leipzig in the

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[4] Grillando, *Tractatus desortilegiis,* in *Malleus maleficarum (*1669 cd.), i (vol. 2, pt. 2). 281, sec also 283.

[5] Bodin, *De'monomanie, fos.* 139-44 (quotation at 140').

‘ Remy, *Demonolatsy,* 4.

[7] Boguet, *Examen of Witches,* 116-17, but see also 132-6, where Boguet allowed for demonic contacts after witches fell into judicial hands.

• Valderrama, *Histoire generale,* bk. 3, 287; Del Rio, *Disquisitionum magicarum,* 222, 384-6; Spina, *Quaeslio de strigibus,* in *Malleus maleficarum* (1669 edn.), i (vol. 2, pt. 1). 137; Da Prieno, Dr *strigimagarum,* 189-90; D'Anania, *De natura daemonum,* 181-2; Forner, *Panoplia armaturae Det,* 102-3; Agricola, *Grundtlicher Bericht,* 61-3; Hofmann, *Apologia,* sig. C3'; Michael Freudius, *Gevissens-Fragen von processen vieder die Hexen, insonderheit denen Riehtem hochnottg zuwissen* (Gustrow, 1667), 51; *Michictis, Admirable historie,* 344-5; Crespet, L[illegible]; fo. 315 .

’ See, for example, Josse Damhouder, *Praxis rerum cnminalium* (Antwerp, 1554), 18 /-8.

1690s.[10] But these notions reached wider audiences and seem to have had a more general currency than these examples suggest. In the Richard Brome and Thomas Heywood comedy of 1634, *The Late Lancashire Witches,* one of the characters says that he has heard ‘that Witches apprehended under hands of lawfull authority, doe loose [s/r] their power; And all their spells are instantly dissolv’d.’[11] Many other witches, too, spoke (allegedly) like those in Lorraine. In a trial of 1586 Marie Martin ofNeuf-ville in Picardy said that her devil had not been able to come to her once she was detained. In 1612 an English witch from Northamptonshire was said to have ‘often pitifully complained unto her spirit that the power of the law would be stronger than the power of her art’. Elizabeth Sawyer, heroine of *The witch of Edmonton,* told the Newgate prison visitor Henry Goodcole that imprisonment had freed her mentally and physically from the devil’s attentions. And at Salisbury assizes in 1653, Lord Chief Baron Wilde and the jurors disappointed Anne Bodenham by finding her guilty of witchcraft instead of succumbing to the love-inducing charms she wore round her neck.[12]

The essential divinity of justice was thus communicated to the agents who implemented it, the places where they did so and where witches were imprisoned,[13] and even to the victims of *maleficium.* When witches were executed, declared Daniel Drovin, all the evils they had done ceased to have any effect.[14] Even when they were apprehended, imprisoned, or convicted, their victims suddenly recovered or enjoyed a respite. Of the six witches accused of causing demonic possessions in his family in 1621, Edward Fairfax wrote that ‘[neither] when they were in durance, or any restraint laid upon them, did they execute any of their power upon the children’. Later in the century, the fits of one Richard Jones ceased on the day the two witches named in his case were sent to gaol. In 1664, during the Bury St Edmunds assizes before Sir Matthew Hale, guilty verdicts brought a sudden end to the fits of the bewitched and restored the full use of their speech and limbs—‘within less than half an hour’, it was said.[15] Most striking of all, perhaps, is the way judicial inviolability generated further stories of the kind which Nider had originally drawn on. An example is the case of Jean de Bonncvaux, tried for witchcraft at Montmorillon in Poitou in 1599, who,

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[10] Fachineus, *praises, Disputatio juridica, de maleficis et sagis,* 11; Valentin Alberti, *praeses* (Christian Stridtbeckh *respondent), Dissertatio academica, de sagis, site foeminis, commercium cum malo spiritu habentibus, e Christianapneumatologia desumpta* (Leipzig, n.d. [1690]), sigs. Eii’-Eiii^r.

[11] *The late Lancashire witches,* in *Dramatic Works of Thomas Heywood,* iv. 255, where the witches are also said to have been ‘discharm’d’ by their arrest. Cf. id, *Gunaikeion* 418-19.

[12] Le Caron, *De la tranquillity d'esprit,* 199, see also 450; *The witches of Northamptonshire* (London 1612), cited Rosen (cd.), *Witchcraft,* 305-1; H(enry) G[oodcole], *The wonderfull discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer a witch, late of Edmonton* (London, 1621), sig. Di'; Edmond Bower, *Doctor Lamb revived-or witchcraft condemn'd in Anne Bodenham* (London, 1653), 32. *vca.or.wncn*

*’ For the sacredness of prisons, sec, for example, the *advocat* Vincent Tagereau, *Le Vray Practicien francois* (Paris, 1633), 361, and for the immunity of executioners, Pieter Spierenburg, *The Spectacle of Suffering: Executions and the Evolution of Repression* (Cambridge, 1984), 30. J J

” Drovin, *Vengeances divines,* fo. 193L See also Michaelis, *Admirable historic.* 416, on the death of Gaufridy; Bodin, *Demonomame.* fo. 217% attributing the cessation of witchcraft to the ending of God’s chastisements.

[15] Fairfax, *Daemonologia.* 95; Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus.* 343 *; A try al ofwitches, at the assizes held at Bury St. Edmonds... 1664* (London, 1682), 2,11,57.

> coming to the confrontation with a witness ... called on the Devil, who, in the presence of the judges... seized him and lifted him four to five feet from the ground, and let him drop onto the tiled floor like a bag of wool...; whereupon, being picked up by two guards he was found to be black and blue all over, frothing at the mouth and suffering grievously in his body. Questioned as to the cause of his levitation and the sudden illness or change in him, he replied that it was the Devil on whom he had called to remove him from the hands of Justice, who having made an effort to do this, could not do it, because he had taken the judiciall oath, and the Devil had no more power over him.[14 * 16]

One could hardly hope to find a more graphic illustration of the assumption that the judicial process in these cases was essentially a struggle for power, or, again, of the very concrete terms in which this was interpreted.

* * *

The defence of inviolability from witchcraft is equally revealing of contemporary conceptions of the magistrate's authority. Immediately noticeable is the extent to which writers resort in this context too to Romans 13. The authors of the *Malleus maleficarum,* for example, argued that, 'since, as St Paul says, all power is from God, and a sword for the avenging of the wicked and the retribution of the good, it is no wonder that devils are kept at bay when justice is being done to avenge that horrible crime.'[17] Forner agreed that God could not permit magistrates to be harmed in any way by witchcraft since they were appointed by him to act in his place ('«/ *Magistrate a se ordinato, et eitis loco')* and said to be wielders of the sword against evil.[18] Girolamo Menghi and Candido Brognolo also turned to St Paul in this context.[19] So even did Johann Weyer on the subject of resistance to torture by means of demonic charms.[20] Others resorted to different texts but reached the same conclusion. Remy cited Psalm 82 with the comment: 'See how God defends and protects the authority of those to whom He has given the mandate of His power upon earth, and how He has therefore made them partakers of His prerogative and honour, calling them Gods even as Himself: so that without doubt they are sacrosanct and, by reason of their duty and their office, invulnerable even to the spells of witches.'[21] D'Anania also spoke of justice as 'sacrosanct', while Heinrich von Schultheis argued that judges were mediators of Christ's dispensation. Christ was available as a weapon against demonism, and magistrates should avail themselves of the divinity of their office to

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[14] Anon., *Discours sommaire des sortileges,* 25-6, see also 8, where the tract appeals conventionally to magistrates to use the divine gift of the sword of justice.

[17] [Kramer and Sprengcr], *Malleus maleficarum,* 90.

[11] Forner, *Panoplia armaturae Dei,* 102; cf. Agricola, *Griindtlicher Bericht, 6\-3.*

» Girolamo Menghi, *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica, et possibilita delle mirabih, et stupende operation delli demon; et deimalefici* (Venice, 1595), 476-7 (first pub. 1580); Brognolo, *Alexicacon,* 35-6.

[20] Weyer, *Depraestigiisdaemonum,* 398.

[21] Remy, *Demonolatry,* 4; cf. Delcambre, *Concept de la sorcellene,* n. 258, for the currency of this notion in Lorraine (in connection with witches' loss of power to stay silent or resist torture).

apply his benefits to mankind by ridding the world of witches.[22] According to Boguet, justice came directly from God and could in no way be subverted by witches.[23]

The ideas we have been considering were the virtual monopoly of Catholic authors. Some Protestants like Lambert Daneau and Johann Georg Godelmann were noticeably cooler about the whole subject (which Daneau attributed to popular error) and gave merely practical reasons for the powerlessness of imprisoned witches. They could not receive the materials they required or communicate with Satan without risking implicating themselves further. But there were no other hindrances to *maleficium:* 'Neither doeth the judges authoritie of itselfe, nor the place, bring any impediment thereto.'[24] Nevertheless, Protestant opinion on the subject was itself divided. One of the staunchest supporters of the tradition stemming from Nider and the *Malleus maleficarum* was James VI and I, who, conscious of his own rather fragile authority and the strength of aristocratic factionalism in Scotland, used the privilege of inviolability to set public magistrates like himself decisively apart from ordinary men and their concerns. The powers of witches arrested by private individuals for personal reasons remained, he argued, intact:

> But if on the other parte, their apprehending and detention be by the lawfull Magistrate, upon the just respectes of their guillinesse in that craft, their power is then no greater then before that ever they medled with their master. For where God beginnes justlie to strike by his lawfull Lieutennenles, it is not in the Devilles power to defraude or bereave him of the office, or effect of his powerfull and revenging Scepter.[25]

This was a view shared by the English divine Thomas Cooper, whose *The mystery of witch-craft* (1617) was a typical piece of Calvinist demonology. His virtually identical statement appears at the head of this chapter.

The Catholics themselves were by no means unanimous. Some were unhappy with the scope for superstition, others with internal contradictions. At odds with their earlier arguments were the precautions which Krämer and Sprenger advised judges to take against *maleficium,* including even the avoidance of a witch's touch, 'especially in any contact of their bare arms or hands'. Judicial officials were to protect themselves by carrying or wearing sacred objects, amongst them salt consecrated on Palm Sunday and blessed herbs enclosed in an Agnus Dei. They were to guard against the bewitching power of the words spoken by the accused during torture, and against the mollifying power of their glances in the courtroom. The authors of the *Malleus* warned solemnly that for this reason, 'the witch should be led backward into the presence of the Judge and his assessors'. Even at the point of arrest, witches were to be carried off without them being able to touch the ground and thereby replenish their powers of resistance and of staying silent under cross-examination—powers

[22] D'Anania, *De natura daemonum. W-2; Schultheis. Aussffl^^iche Instruction*, preface, 1-11.

[u] Boguet, *Examen of Witches.* 82.

« Daneau, *Dialogue of witches,* sig. Jviii'-; cf. Godelmann, *Tractatusde magis,* bk. 3,51.

[25] James VI and I, *Daemonologie.* 51.

which their apprehension had initially nullified.[26] Even as they stand, these modifications are revealing, reinforcing the impression that the judicial processes directed against witchcraft were viewed in almost sacramental terms. But although they were frequently repeated in later years they were also often criticized for diluting the original principle of judicial immunity.[27] Thus the Frenchman Daniel Drovin denounced the suggestion that witches could bewitch judges merely by looking at them on the grounds that no one fit for judicial office could possibly become a victim. If God occasionally allowed it to happen to his lieutenants on earth, this was precisely in order to punish those who, mistrusting his guardianship, gave superstitious credence to the idea of their own vulnerability and thus disqualified themselves in his eyes. For a judge to fear witchcraft was in fact no less dangerous than witchcraft itself, for it subordinated the justice of God, at least in principle, to the power of demonic charms.[28]

Del Rio too, looking back at the *Malleus maleficarum* with post-Tridentine disdain, dissociated himself from the superstitions that granted efficacy to touching and looking. His own compromise suggestion was that witches might, with God's permission, continue to operate after captivity but not after trial. Even so this was rarely granted (and actual abscondments never), lest the execution of justice against them be impeded; 'For it would seem that the Devil could accomplish more with his servants the witches, than God with his, who are the judges *(Nam videretur plus posse Dia bolus in suis minis tris strigibus; quant Deus in suis, qui sunt Judices).'* This is a remark of some significance, juxtaposing in an equivalence of function, as comparable agents of antithetical powers, the two groups who faced each other across the moral divide of the courtroom and, by implication, across early modern society itself.[29]

Intimated in these arguments and qualifications was a yet more widely shared misgiving about the extent to which judicial inviolability was expected to work *ex opere operato* in too mechanical a fashion. The explanation offered by Grillando, D'Anania, and Remy—that, otherwise, demons and witches would seem to have power over God himself—was shown to rest on the mistaken assumption, almost Manichaean in nature, that demonic powers existed absolutely and in their own right

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“ [Kramer and Sprenger], *Malleus maleficarum,* 228,215-16.

ⁿ For an exact repetition, see Da Prierio, *Destrigimagarum,* 231-9; cf. Heywood, *Cunaikeion,* 418—19 (witches 'all desire to see the judges before they come to their arraignement, being of a confident opinion, that if they behold them first, the judges have no power to condemne them: but if they be first brought to the place, all their sorceries are vaine and of no validitie').

'• Drovin, *Vengeances divines,* fos. 24V-2' (the story with which Drovin supports the principle of the inviolability of justice is of the case of Guillaume Edelin (1453), taken from the *Chroniques* of Enguerrand de Monstrelet). Other similar criticisms of the 'superstitions' of the *Malleus maleficarum m* these matters are in Fachineus, *praeses, Disputatio juridica, de maleficis et sagis,* 11 (but allowing inviolability itself); Boguet, *Examen of Witches,* 213, see also 82; Hofmann, *Apologia principum,* sig. C3'. For a Catholic view apparently dissenting from the principle itself, see *Guazxo, Compendium maleficarum,* 132.

” Del Rfo, *Disauisitionum magicarum,* 384-6, quotation at 386; Del Rio was followed in all this in Ferdinand*XVaiaenef%er,praeses(J.l'leydccker,proponens),Dispulalioiuridicademaleficuetprocessuaaversus eos instituendo* (Ingolstadt, 1629), 42-3. For a similar remark but inspired by canon law, see Damhouder, *Praxis rerum criminalium,* 187-8.

and not by divine permission. Satan had helped to bring Christ to the cross and Job to his knees but no one could infer from this that he had power over God. Inviolability was not, therefore, an automatic privilege of judicial office; it was, as Del Rio again urged, contingent on good behaviour. Only judges who were 'worthy of the name and who, putting God before their eyes, carry out their duties piously and well' deserved it; avarice, ambition, cruelty, or the thirst for revenge rendered them unfit for office and at the same time made them vulnerable to spells.[30] 'Fear God,' Bishop Forncr likewise warned the magistrates,

> have an eye to justice, lest avarice and the taking of gifts blind you; may neither enmity nor friendship, nor partiality to men lead you astray from the balance or equanimity; thus you will not only be free from all the machinations of devils, but also, in averting this diabolical *zizania,* you will hereafter obtain inexpressible reward in heaven.[31]

The qualification, like the original principle, applied to all judicial officials. A gaoler who (it was reported in *Malleus maleficarum) was* bewitched by a woman on the point of her execution, was not, Boguet commented, 'performing his duty well'.[32]

Eventually these became the standard opinions, adopted by the Calvinist King James of Scotland and the Lutherans Heinrich Nicolai at Danzig and Christian Stridtbeckh at Leipzig, as well as by Catholics like Brognolo.[33] In James's formulation the efficacy of witchcraft directed at the magistrate waxed and waned according to a sliding scale, increasing as a divine tool to punish any negligence or indifference, or dwindling to the point of non-existence as he set about rooting it out.[34] To the modern mind this seems like a view that could never be falsified. What was felt to be important at the time of the witch trials was the need to maintain, indeed to strengthen, the principle that judges were immune from magic without threatening God's residual authority to dispense with it on occasion, and without making it dependent on either the efficacy of the rituals attached to the office or the routine (possibly corrupt) performance of its duties. In a process which we have no difficulty in identifying—given the general aims of the Protestant and Catholic reform movements—some witchcraft writers tried to take the magic out of inherited conceptions of political authority, while keeping the religion very much in. Henceforth, divine protection was to be a matter of attitude.

Even so, and this too is a familiar differential, Catholic authors were obliged to make the finer distinctions. In one further and crucial respect, their arguments led them even closer to a sacramental view of justice. According to the *Malleus maleficarum,* despite their privileged role as custodians of divine authority
trates were not alone in their enjoyment of immunity from
it with two other groups of men—those who, on

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[30] Del Rio,

[32]

[33]

saintliness, were protected *ex occasione* ‘by a special Angelic guardianship’, and those who availed themselves of exorcisms?[5] Far from weakening the original idea, this bracketing of magistrates with other possessors of sacrosanctity strengthened it considerably. Parallelisms between judges and saints and between justice and exorcism may very well, given the extent to which the climate of opinion in early modern Europe remained unreformed, have induced yet more mechanical expectations of judicial efficacy against witches. But even in their pure state they tell us an enormous amount about the attitudes that were brought to bear on the prosecution of witches. In particular, the opportunities for interchanging the categories of the judicial and exorcistic processes seem to be of especial importance. The significance of each set of actions could be powerfully' enhanced by the meanings associated primarily with the other.

That politics provided a further idiom for exorcism will be readily apparent. The wielding of power was of its very essence, whether aimed at control of particular demoniacs or at control of events in general. A successful dispossession legitimated the authority in whose name it was made, thus making propaganda not a corruption of valid exorcism but one of its necessary presuppositions?[6] In the Catholic rite, especially, charges to depart and the invocations of the theme of obedience to the Church formed an overtly political rhetoric. We even find devils being read to from Romans 13?[7] It was usual to speak of possession as a kind of tyranny and of exorcism as the substitution of the true rulership of Christ, as if the demoniac was some sort of polity for which two mighty potentates contended?[8] The exorcisms of the Italian Franciscan Alexander Albcrtinus linked the expulsion of demons metaphorically to the establishing of peace and harmony among kings and princes?[9] To exorcize demons, said Jean Le Normant, was the ecclesiastical equivalent of bringing them to trial, which meant that the exorcists became ‘judges who prosecute the demons whom they interrogate’.[40] In Bamberg, bishop Fomer drew parallels between the pursuit of thieves and robbers by the legal servants of the prince and the defeat of demons by the clerical exorcists empowered by Christ.[41]

According to the traditional Hildcbrandine doctrine, still part of early modern exorcism texts, the priest was ‘a spiritual emperor empowered to expel demons’. Once subjugated, they too might respond with orthodox political theory. This was the case with ‘Verin’, whose ‘sermons’ through the mouthpiece of the Ursuline nun Louise Capeau urged the necessity for obedience in Church and State.[42] But while

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” [Kramer and Sprenger], *Malleus maleficarum.* 89-92. Michaelis, *Admirable historie.* 344-5, spoke of the inviolability of‘just men’ and all ‘superiors*.

M See above, Ch. 26.

” Stampa, *Fuga Satanae,* 42; Nicuesa, *Exorcismarium,* 399; Alessio Pom, *Anhdotano contro It demonit* (Venice, 1597), 17.

[51] *c.%. Osuna, Flagellum diaboli, {0.35"*.*

” Alexander Albcrtinus, *Malleus damonum. Site quatuor expenmentattssimi exorctsmt, ex Evangeltts collect!* (Verona, 1620), 25,84,156,217.

« U Normant, **Remonstrances,** 3. » *Fomcr, Panopl,a armaturaeDe, KO.*

« Michaelis, *Admirable histcrie,* fos. 133,161,171-5, and 176’ (where the demon acknowledged that superiors were ‘Gods on earth*).

the ritual was still under way they invariably reacted to exorcistic commands or holy objects with violent forms of resistance that physically contorted their hosts. In modern cases of possession among the Comoro islanders of Mayotte, examples of apparently random body violence and uncontrolled emotion turn out to be indications to observing villagers of the specific forms, qualities, and intentions of spirits, even these appear to have a 'language' and, therefore, a significance.[43] We may likewise suppose that carlv modern Europeans were able to read the broadly political message of demonic rebelliousness in the wild disorders of their demoniacs. At Loudun, Louis XIII's brother Gaston d'Orleans gave orders to a devil 'saying nothing else to the demon, except that he had to obey the prince's intent'; the devil obeyed but (it was said) was as violent in his resistance as when constrained in the name of religion.[41] * * [44]

But here it is the reversal of these symbolic associations that concerns us—the way in which the idioms of the exorcism shed light on contemporary conceptions of judicial authority and the inviolability of the magistrate. Priests were rendered immune from demonism by the protective power of the rite; so too, it seems, were judges by the divinity of the justice they embodied. At Soissons in 1582 the devil in possession of Laurent Boissonet could not even force the boy to bite the consecrated middle and index fingers of the theologal Jean Canart;[45] witches too lost their powers of *maleficium* once they were 'touched by the hands of public justice' (an action which, as we have seen, could be interpreted literally as well as metaphorically). There arc vivid descriptions of the torments experienced by demoniacs as demons sought to evade the commands of exorcists; but no less an authority than judge Boguet reported that the demoniac witch Rollande Du Vernois had revealed that when he 'approached the guard-room to hear her statement she was tormented more violently than usual, and said that her devils felt [his] approach and for that reason tormented her in that manner'. It is important that Boguet gives the story as an illustration of inviolability; 'Herein', he continues, 'there is certainly a secret judgement of God, who will not permit the wicked, such as are witches, to have power over the persons of Judges, so that justice, which, as King Joram said, is of Him, shall be executed.'[46]

Even in Protestant contexts justice could take on a quasi-exorcistic, counter-magical aspect. In 1647 one of the possessed children of George Muschamp of Northumberland begged for it against the suspected witch Dorothy Swinow on the grounds that

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[41] Lambck, *Human Spirits,* 102-4.

[M] *Relation veritable de ce qui s 'est passi aux exorcismes des religieuses Ursulines possedees de Loudun en la presence de Monsieur Frere unique du Roy* (Paris, 1635), 34. On the theme of obedience during the Loudun exorcisms, sec M. de La Foucaudierc, *Les Miraculeux Effete de Wglise romaine sur les estranges horribles et effroyables actions des demons et princes des diables, en la possession des religieuses Ursulines et filles sdculieres d la ville de Loudun* (Paris, 1635), 7, 15.

[45] Walker, *Unclean Spirits,* 32. Sebasticn Michaelis confirmed that devils could not bite sacred fine with the comment: 'This experience ought to put the Ministers of Hereticks with all their adherent* utter shame and confusion'; *Admirable historic,* fo. 385.

[46] Boguet, *Examen of Witches,* 116-17.

> if "c ha\c but ordinary justice, which ought not to be denyed to the poorest creature who demands it, my brother that sits there shall goe home as well as ever he did, I no more tormented, my mother no more afflicted, and my sisters torments at an end: if we have not justice my torments shall be doubled.[47]

It was in Catholic lands, however, that the theme was most insistent. The original justification given in the *Malleus ntaleficarinn* for the carrying or wearing of consecrated salt and herbs by judges was that the Church 'exorcises and blesses such objects for this very' purpose, as is shown in the ceremony of exorcism when it is said, I* or the banishing of all the power of the devil, etc.'[48] The principle that judges enjoyed a freedom from demonism analogous to that of the exorcist was repeated often enough by' witchcraft authors; but it was confirmed in the pages of the Catholic exorcism specialists too—men like Girolamo Menghi, Raffacle Della Torre, and, later, Gervasio Pizzurini of the order of Minims—and further implied by the carrying over (as we shall see next) of exorcistic forms into judicial torture.[49] The implication was clear: comparable privileges derived from comparable roles. Just as priests forced demons out of the bodies of individual demoniacs, so magistrates could be regarded as 'exorcists' of the body politic, ridding whole societies of the witches that 'possessed' them.[50] One of them, the *prevot general* of Normandy, Loys Morel, did actually attempt the exorcism of a possessed servant-girl Fran?oise Fontaine during a *proces verbal al* Louviers in 1591, citing the principle of judicial inviolability as he did so. There was no need to fear the assaults of devils, he told her, since they had no power over justice or over those who were in its hands. The girl seemed to be listening instead to an invisible spirit behind her back, whereupon Morel pronounced this formal charge:

> Devil, by the power that I have as a judge established by the King, and having in my hands God's justice for the punishment of the wicked, I command you to leave this body.

She was subsequently exorcized by a local priest, Pierre Pellet, who was also present, but by Morel too, who was assaulted and beaten by the invisible presence. Fontaine was eventually released from her torments by Pellet after nearly three weeks of exorcisms, during which her hair was cut off and burned.[51]

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[47] J *Vonderfutl news from the north,* 15-16.

[41] [Kramer and *Sponger], Malleus maleficarum,* 228.

[47] Menghi, *Compendio,* 475-85; Della Torre, *Tractatus depotestate ecclestae coercendi daemones,* 64–76; Pizzurini, *Enchiridion exorcisticum,\4-\(>.*

[w] For some suggestive examples from Catholic Central Europe, see Evans, *Making of the Habsburg* ***Monarchy*, 392.**

[51] *Proces verbal fait pour delivrer une fille possedee par le matin esprit d Louviers,* pub. from the MS by-Armand Benet, intro. B. de Moray (Paris, 1883), 40, sec also 49-51.

39

The Charisma of Office

> Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.
>
> (Romans 13:1)

> The term 'charisma' will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a 'leader'. In primitive circumstances this peculiar kind of quality is thought of as resting on magical powers, whether of prophets, persons with a reputation for therapeutic or legal wisdom, leaders in the hunt, or heroes in war.
>
> (Max Weber, *Economy and Society)*

POLITICAL sociology's most famous analysis of the grounds on which the exercise of authority might be validly defended was offered by Max Weber. He distinguished three forms of legitimate domination *(Herrshaft)*—'rational' (or 'legal'), 'traditional', and 'charismatic'—each resting on quite different credentials. Rational authority, he proposed, was exercised by virtue of the legality of a body of formally enacted rules and codes, in conformity to which those in power issued their commands. It was based, above all, on the abstract idea of the supremacy of the law, rather than anything personal in the nexus of authority, duty, and obedience, and Weber thought that its purest variety lay in the bureaucratic structures associated with the modern European state. Traditional authority, on the contrary, was warranted entirely in terms of norms derived from the past, issuing in customary arrangements believed to date from time immemorial. Its basis was the sanctity of routine, a kind of piety for what was habitual, and its characteristic modes were those of patriarchy, mastership, and lordship, along with the reciprocal personal loyalty of household dependants, servants, clients, and vassals. The transmutation of these domestic versions into forms for governing whole societies led to what Weber called the 'patrimonial' authority of princes over their subjects. Finally, charismatic authority stemmed from the exceptional qualities of heroism, religiosity, wisdom (or whatever), of specific individuals supremely 'gifted by grace'. Disdainful of reason and disruptive of tradition, it inspired a sense of mission in those 'called' to positions of leadership and evoked a mixture of faith and awe in their disciples. As the quotation above makes clear, Weber associated it with the wielding of what were believed to be supernatural powers, and he usually identified it with the spontaneous social groupings generated by warriors, huntsmen, prophets, saints, and sorcerers. In the broadest terms, he thought that forms of authority in primitive and pre-modern (pre-‘disenchanted’) societies were dominated by the traditional and charismatic types. ‘In prerationalistic periods’, he wrote, ‘tradition and charisma between them have almost exhausted the whole of the orientation of action.’[1]

There has, of course, been considerable argument about both the analytical coherence of this scheme and its utility when applied to concrete cases. An especially lively debate has surrounded the notion of ‘charisma’ and its relevance to the recent political experiences of both European and non-European cultures.[2] This is not the place to investigate whether Weber's account closely matches the complex institutional developments that occurred across the face of Western Europe during the early modern period; indeed, it was not his intention that it should. The benefits of classic ideal-typical investigation are derived from abstracting entities from the social processes to which they belong and then improving on them, so to speak, by analysis. It is in this way, and not through their descriptive power, that Weber’s pure categories help bring into sharper relief the salient features of the kinds of authority brought theoretically to bear on the prosecution of witchcraft.

They have the added advantage (at least in the context of this study) of presupposing that types of authority and obedience cannot be identified in conceptual isolation. They are what they are only because they are construed in certain ways; as Weber said, ‘it should be kept clearly in mind that the basis of every authority, and correspondingly of every kind of willingness to obey, is a *belief* a belief by virtue of which persons exercising authority are lent prestige.’[3] It is not necessary that this

[1] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology,* ed. G. Roth and C. Wittich, ed. T. Parsons (Glencoe, Ill., 1947) i. 245. The outline of the types of legitimacy is at i. 212-45, with a more elaborate account of charismatic authority at iii. 1111-57.

[2] For a sample of the literature, see Claude Ake, ‘Charismatic Legitimation and Political Integration’, *Comparative Stud. Society and Hist.* 9 (1966—7), 1-13; Reinhard Bcndix, ‘Reflections on Charismatic Leadership', in Dennis Wrong (ed.), *Max Weber* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1970), 166—81; Peter L. Berger, ‘Charisma and Religious Innovation: The Social Location of Israelite Prophecy', *American Sociological Rev.* 28 (1963), 940-50; Peter M. Blau, ‘Critical Remarks on Weber’s Theory of Authority’, in Wrong (ed.), *Max Weber,* 147-65; Charles Camic, ‘Charisma: Its Varieties, Preconditions, and Consequences’, *Sociological Inquiry,* 50 (1980), 5-23; S. N. Eisenstadt, ‘Charisma and Institution Building: Max Weber and Modern Sociology’, in id. (ed.), *Max Weber. On Charisma and Institution Building: Selected Papers* (London, 1968), pp. ix-lvi; William H. Friedland, ‘For a Sociological Concept of Charisma’, *Social Forces,* 43 (1964), 18-26; Carl J. Friedrich, ‘Political Leadership and the Problem of the Charismatic Power’, *J of Politics,* 23 (1961), 3-24; K. J. Ratman, ‘Charisma and Political Leadership’, *Political Stud.* 12 (1964), 341-54; Arthur Schweitzer, ‘Theory and Political Charisma’, *Comparative Stud. Society and Hist.* 16 (1974), 150-81; Edward Shils, ‘Charisma, Order, and Status’, *American Sociological Rev.* 30 (1965), 199-213; R. C. Tucker, ‘The Theory of Charismatic Leadership’, *Daedalus,* 97 (1968), 731-56. There have been few attempts to apply the model of charisma to those historical epochs most subject to this form of authority. This is despite Weber’s own use of examples from early and medieval history and the doubt, expressed most forcibly by Karl Loewenstein, as to whether ‘the quality of charismatic leadership is not peculiar, and always has been, to political milieus conditioned exclusively, or at least to a large extent, by magical, ritualistic, or mystically religious elements.’ If that were the case, according to Loewenstein ‘charisma would apply chiefly to the pre-Cartesian West’ as well as to modern Asian and African societies; see Karl Loewenstein, *Max Weber's Political Ideas in the Perspective of our Time,* trans. Richard and Clara Winston ([Amherst Mass.], 1966), 79.

[3] Weber, *Economy and Society*, i. 263.

belief be ‘correct’ according to some ultimate standard of rationality, morality, or aesthetics. The past of the traditionalist might, in other institutional contexts, be thought fabulous and mythical, the powers of the wielder of charisma impossible and fraudulent. What alone is important, Weber argued, is how the individual is actually regarded by those subject to his authority. While the charismatic leader must be (as Bryan Wilson has put it) ‘a plausible vessel for divine grace’, the exact nature of his plausibility is a cultural matter; it may rest on any culturally significant attribute or attributes. The question of the authenticity of his behaviour is thus tied conceptually to the cultural values and expectations associated with it, and the sociologist is thereby freed from the need to make any value judgements regarding it. To those in search of the notions of authority underlying textual attempts to eradicate witches this is a reassuring viewpoint.[4]

Under which of Weber’s headings, then, can we place the demonological arguments defending the witch trials and the more general political values of which these arguments were expressions? At the simple and purely technical level, where witches infringed codes of law and were formally condemned for doing so, the category of ‘rational’ authority gives us a perfectly adequate purchase—as it does wherever early modern institutions were subject to the rule of law or succumbed to the impersonal forces of bureaucratization. But it neglects the idea that witchcraft was specially offensive to the divine order of which magistracy was a crucial part. It also falls well short of the insistence that magistrates should deal with the crime with a godly, almost sacerdotal zeal which transcended the formal requirements of their jurisdiction. And it cannot account at all for the principle of judicial inviolability from demonic magic (in any of its forms). The fact that the normative rules in question and the legal authority warranted by them were so often traced to the Old Testament seems far more significant here than the pure spirit of legalism.

Does this mean that the category of ‘traditional’ authority offers us more help? It cannot be seriously doubted that traditionalist modes of thought and behaviour prevailed in early modern political life, despite occasional rejections of the past as the ultimate yardstick of propriety. Weber’s label ‘patrimonial’ seems especially apt in the circumstances of princely government at the time, as do some of the troublesome areas he detected in it—notably, the strains of the transition from domestic to territorial forms of administration, the tension between the discretionary (or fiduciary) powers of prerogative and the limits to it set by custom and convention, and the plight of officials caught between personal loyalty to the ruler and the investment potential of their offices.[5]

Nevertheless, the judicial authority invoked in books on witchcraft was legitimated in terms of its divinity, not its ability to enshrine custom; ‘God Almightie hath singled them out, it was said of the judges in the case of the Lancaster witches in 1612, ‘and set them on his Seat, for the defence of Justice.’[6] The laws against witchcraft themselves were said to embody the divinely inspired commands of Moses, the supreme charismatic figure of the Old Testament. No amount of pious regard for tradition could defend magistrates from demonism; only direct divine protection secured this particular benefit of office. While it is historically the case that divine right theories of government enjoyed their greatest vogue in association with patrimonial rulership, there remains an analytical distinction between sacredness as a gift of grace and sacredness as a secondary attribute of old age. And it was under the heading of charismatic, not traditional, authority that Weber spoke of the ‘genuine meaning of the divine right of kings’.[7]

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[4] Weber, *Economy and Society,* i. 242, see also 111,112; Wilson, *Noble Savages,* 29.

[5] On ‘patrimonial’ government in early modern Europe, see J. H. Shennan, *The Origins of the Modern £uroP*anMMe,H50-l725(London,* 1974), 11-43; David Parker, *The Making of French Absolutism* (London, 1983), 81–94.

It is true that, outside the theatre and literature, charisma itself had few pure applications in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. Weber spoke of it as an essentially innovative, even revolutionary force, but one that was unstable and fleeting and which began to evaporate from the moment of its inception; and only men like the German political prophets Hans Böhm, Thomas Müntzer, and Jan Bockelson, or the latter-day messiahs and saints of the Civil War period in England approached the heroic stature he evidently had in mind.[8] Even so, Weber also allowed for an important (indeed, inevitable) measure of ‘routinization’ of charisma that gave it a continuous presence as an element in patterns of authority which might otherwise be hostile to it. And while he sometimes admitted that this resulted in a radical change in its disruptive and antinomian character, he nevertheless insisted that vestigial charisma could still ‘fulfill its social function’ as a rationale for leadership.[9] Chief among the means of its institutionalization were the establishment of artificial lines of ‘apostolic’ or designated succession, and hereditary transference through blood ties (‘lineage charisma’). In each case the transmission might be effected symbolically in rites. The important point was that charisma became depersonalized, a property of office *(Amtscharisma)* rather than of the person of its incumbent:

> In this case the belief in legitimacy is no longer directed to the individual, but to the acquired qualities and to the effectiveness of the ritual acts. The most important example is the transmission of priestly charisma by anointing, consecration, or the laying on of hands; and of royal authority, by anointing and coronation. The *character indelebilis* thus acquired means that the charismatic qualities and powers of the office are emancipated from the personal qualities of the priest.[10]

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[4] Thomas Potts, *The wonderfull discovery of witches in the countie of Lancaster* (1613), ed. G.B. Harrison (London, 1929), 188.

[7] Weber, *Economy and Society,* i. 242; cf. Friedrich, ‘Political Leadership and the Problem of the Charismatic Power’, 18.

• Cohn, *Pursuit of the Millennium,* 223-80; Hill, *World Turned Upside Down;* A. L. Morton, *The World of the Ranters’ Religious Radicalism in the English Revolution* (London, 1970); Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (London, 1985), 14,36-7; Capp, ‘The Fifth Monarchists and Popular Millenarian-[illegible]’, 18[illegible]-5.

lSm’ Weber, *Economy and Society,* iii. 1135, see also 1121-48. On Weber’s reconciling of charisma with routine institutions, see Eisenstadt, ‘Charisma and Institution Building, pp. xviii-xxvi.

[10] Weber, *Economy and Society,* i. 248-9.

Weber clearly thought that hereditary monarchy, particularly the development of early French and English kingship, was an important case of the historical transformation of charisma into an orderly institution (one of his sub-categories is ‘charismatic kingship’). An additional point, however, was its diffusion as a source of prestige throughout a ruling group. It was in this sense that charisma could become a general, if attenuated, feature of the social organization of states where forms of traditional authority were otherwise dominant.[11] In the context of religious societies in particular, it could lose the impetus to novelty and become normative and centripetal.

Demonological concepts of magistracy do not show all the features of this third type, even in its modified form, but no other categorization of authority fits them so well. It has to be said that, although magistracy could become hereditary in early modern Europe, this was for altogether more mundane reasons than the sacred duty of preserving the continuity of grace. Magistrates certainly did not acquire the *character indclebilis* of the priest, as the argument about their inviolability being contingent on good behaviour makes clear. Nevertheless, their role in witchcraft affairs was seen as something of a mission, even a calling, and as a means of fulfilling spiritual as well as temporal obligations. The law they administered against witches was, following all forms of charismatic adjudication, thought to derive originally from divine decrees and revelations; and the imagery of ‘bearing the sword’, still universal in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, was an echo of the way such judgements were originally implemented.[12]

Magistrates acted as the judicial arm of forms of princely authority in which many of the classic attributes of Weberian charisma were blended with traditionalism, a combination of pure types well provided for under the rubric of ‘routinization’. The language in which they were addressed in the literature of witchcraft, particularly the exegesis of key biblical texts like Romans 13, shows how easily the authority of the lesser magistrate was conflated with that of the greater. Just as princes were responsible under God for dispensing all true justice, so judges and magistrates of every rank partook of the divinity of all genuine political authority. Only an account of authority which embraces what Weber called ‘supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities' can serve as the analytical template for demonological beliefs on the subject; and only charisma does this by definition.

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[11] Weber, *Economy and Society,* i. 251-2; iii. 1139,1122—3. Weber also wrote: ‘Genuine charisma rests upon the legitimation of personal heroism or personal revelation. Yet precisely this quality of charisma as an extraordinary, supernatural, divine power transforms it, after its routinization, into a suitable source for the legitimate acquisition of sovereign power by the successors of the charismatic hero. Routinized chansma thus continues to work in favour of all those whose power and possession is guaranteed by that sovereign power, and who thus depend upon the continued existence of such power’: *From Max Weber: Essay, m Sociology,* trans, and cd. H. H. Gcrth and C. Wright Mills (London, 1948), 262. Shils speaks of Weber's distinction between pure and routinized charisma as a distinction between ‘an intense and immediate contact with what the actors involved believe to be ultimate values or events and a more attenuated, more mediated contact with such values or events through the functioning of established institutions’; ‘Chansma, Order, and Status’, 199-200. A full discussion of this issue is Eisenstadt, ‘Chansma and Institution Building’, pp. ix—lvi.

[12] On the sense of calling and mission, sec Weber on charisma and revelation, ftawmy *and Society,* i. 243; on the sword of justice, see *From Max Weber,* 297.

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Moreover, even if magistrates were not priests, they could certainly behave like them when conducting witchcraft trials. Speaking of the fifteenth century, Edward Peters has said that secular judges began to feel a new sense of spiritual and even sacramental responsibility:

> In this light, the blessings of the instruments of torture in civil courts, the judges' solicitude for the moral condition of defendants, their exhortations to repent, the whole apparatus of civil liturgy that had been adopted from an earlier period and a more exclusively clerical milieu, all supported the discretion and responsibility of the judge and the magistrate.

This, he argues, was also why they came to be thought of as invulnerable to the powers of witches, once the judicial process was under way.[13] Etienne Delcambre found that in the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century trials in Lorraine judges attributed just the same spiritual efficacy to a witch's admission of crime before the secular courts as to sacramental confession itself. As a sign of contrition it actually erased the sin. There was thus no need for a confessor to visit the condemned because the judges, invoking a mystical and priestly conception of magistracy, had saved the souls of the accused and assured their salvation by provoking the admission of their faults. Occasionally the accused even asked the judges to intercede for them before God, so convinced were they too that they were faced with sacred individuals.[14] This was the judicial ethos that Friedrich von Spec was to criticize, blaming some German clerics for encouraging their legal colleagues to think in terms of sacrosanctity and infallibility.[15]

In north-eastern France and the southern Low Countries, judges at all levels of the professional hierarchy saw their role in such missionary terms that Robert Muchembled has labelled them 'laymen only in appearance'—custodians of religion as well as of law. Fired by Tridentine ideals and strengthened by the concentration of justice within a pyramid of officialdom linked to the Crown, they tried to rescue a society besieged by sexual deviants, heretics, and witches. To traditional ideas concerning magistracy as a gift of God and the subject's duty to obey the secular powers, they brought a dualistic vision of the judicial process as a confrontation between

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” Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Law,* pp. xiii, 153; Paravay, 'Genese mcdicvale des chasses aux sorcifcres', 345-7, speaks of Tholosan's sense of mission during trials he conducted prior to writing his *Utmagorumetmaleficiorumerrores.*

[14] Etienne Delcambre, 'Les Proces de sorccllerie en Lorraine. Psychology des juges', *Xevue d Hutoire du Droit (Tydschrifi voor Rechstgeschiedenis)* 21 (1953), 408-18; cf. Briggs, *Communities of Belief,* 89; Fomer *Panoplia armaturae Dei,* 12. Delcambre was one of the few historians of his generation to attempt a reasonably dispassionate analysis of the judicial mentality at work in witchcraft prosecutions, although even he ends up saying that judges suffered from a 'psychose demonophobique' (p. 398). Mandrou, *Magistrals et sorters,* 146, speaks of French secular justices who believed themselves to be investis d une mission divine'.

[B] [Spee], *Cautio criminalis,* 66, see also 23.

divine order and demonic disorder. The 'sacramentalizing' of justice was one consequence of this; 'members of the great courts of justice privately considered that they took part in sacred rites while partaking of power', and an essential distance was established between officials of the law, down to the humblest sergeant, and ordinary men by (for instance) harsher punishments for violence towards their persons. Even the vestments of legal office suggest parallels with the reinforcing of a separate clerical identity after Trent. As a corollary, deviance was thoroughly demonized, with witchcraft emerging as its purest and most threatening form.[16]

In every society, judicial proceedings are invariably the subject of rituals whose symbolism reveals the juridical and moral assumptions which inform them. It seems reasonable to suppose that this was more pronounced in legal systems where magistracy was thought of in partly religious terms and on those occasions when the accused were witches. Yet the actual conduct of witch trials, seen as a matter of symbolic style, has not attracted much attention from historians.[17] Instead, interest has focused partly on legal forms and processes and mainly on statistical analysis—the calculation of rates of occurrence, the numbers of the accused (and of what sex), the likelihood of acquittal, and so forth. There are, nevertheless, indications of judicial religiosity at work, and, in particular, symbolic traces of the idea, common to demonological theory and the expectations of practising magistrates, that witch trials were essentially confrontations between two kinds of moral and even physical force. 'Earthly courts,' writes C. R. Unsworth,

> as they took on board the demonic conception of witchcraft, saw themselves as confronted by malign spiritual powers, creating an atmosphere of tension and apprehension of spectacular supernatural interference,... The witch trial became a contest between the forces of light and those of darkness, which sixteenth-century Christianity portrayed as unprecedendy powerful, sinister and socially pervasive.[1*]

An illustration in the German lawbook of 1511, *Der neii Layenspiegel,* depicting a court in session with an angel and a devil standing on each side of the plaintiff or accused, shows something of the ultimate values at stake.[19] So too does the story of Hans Wcrn, bailiff of Urach in Wiirttemberg, who in 1529 wanted to establish the

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[16] Robert Muchembled, 'Lay Judges and the Acculturation of the Masses (France and the Southern Low Countries, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries)', in Greyerz (ed.), *Religion and Society,* 55-65; cf. Muchembled, *Temps de supplices,* 148-53,173; Mandrou, *Magistrals etsorciers,* 107,146.

[17] An important exception, on whom I rely, is Unsworth, 'Witchcraft Beliefs and Criminal Procedure', 71-98, who speaks (p. 98) of the 'ritual and dramaturgical qualities' of witch trials. For executions as ritual and moral dramas, see R. van Dulmen, *Theatre of Horror: Crime and Punishment*
Germany, trans. Elisabeth Neu *1990),passim,* which is
craft cases; Spierenburg, *Spectacle of* 43-80; Kunze, *to*
sacral aspects of justice in
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guilt of a witch by sacramental means.[20] At the trial of the priest-magician Louis Gaufridy at Aix-en-Provence in 1611 the judge was unable to break down the accused's denials of guilt until fortified by prayers. According to Richard Bernard, this showed that Gaufridy's confession was forced from him 'by Gods hand'.[21] In 1597 the Lorraine *proctireurgénéral* and witchcraft author Nicolas Rémy spoke to his *advocate* about courtrooms being not only splendid in their structure and decoration but sanctified by images of the crucifixion.[22] 'In Europe from the fourteenth century on ..confirms a modern art historian,

> the invocation of God's will in legal proceedings was incorporated more and more into the actual architecture and decoration of temporal law courts. Criminal processes were particularly theologized in this visual manner. They were likened often to the Last Judgment with the presiding magistrate acting as vicar of Christ.

In Germany and the Low Countries murals of the Last Judgement were frequently painted on the wall behind the judges' bench. Where witchcraft was the matter in hand, this iconic image (with its angels and demons) can only have enhanced the idea that temporal justice was 'a reflection of the divine will'.[23]

However, the best indications of this come from the continuing practice of forms of ordeal, for the ordeal is a classic derivation of charismatic justice. As Weber put it, it simply 'replaces personal charismatic authority by a regular procedure which formally determines the will of God'.[24] Trials by ordeal were revived in early modern witchcraft investigations, following their censure and decline since the thirteenth century, because, like the medieval cases in which they had previously been adopted, witchcraft was another 'opaque' crime.[25] But the revival may also be suggestive of a crime uniquely significant in the context of ‘theologized’ justice. If witchcraft was problematic as a supernatural offence, then the answer ‘was to admit evidence of a supernatural or quasi-miraculous character’, even if this meant appealing to popular conceptions of justice and proof that many regarded as vulgar and superstitious.[26] In any case, part of the rationale of the medieval ordeal was that those who were subjected to it were in the grip of the devil, whose threat to the truth would thus be overcome.[27] The ‘swimming’ of witches *(judicium aquae frigtdae)*—‘the most remarkable survival of trials by ordeal’—was in widespread use by 1600, although its ‘characteristic environment’, according to Robert Bartlett, was that of episodes like the Matthew Hopkins investigations in England in the 1640s. It was popular at the local level, but encountered serious academic criticism, including that of many writers on witchcraft, as well as opposition from judicial élites and the higher courts.[28] It was prohibited in 1601, for example, by the *parlement* of Paris—not a court committed to any kind of political theology, perhaps.[29]

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[20] R. W. Scribner, 'Sorcery', Superstition and Society: The Witch of Urach, 1529', in id., *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London, 1987), 257-68.

[21] *The life and death of Lewis Gaufredy,* sigs. Bi' - Bii^{r}; Bernard, *Guide to grand-jury men,* 236-7.

[22] Nicolas Rémy, *Remonstrance fatete a Touverture des plaidoiries du Duché de Lorraine, Pan 1597,* in *Harangues et actions publiques des plus rares esprits de nostre temps* (Paris, 1609), 699.

[21] Samuel Y. Edgerton, Jr., *'Maniera* and the *Mannaia:* Decorum and Decapitation in the Sixteenth Century *, in Franklin W. Robinson and Stephen G. Nichols, Jr. (eds.), *The Meaning of Mannerism* (Hanover, NH, 1972), 75,96; cf. id., *Pictures and Punishment: Art and Criminal Prosecution during the Florentine Renaissance* (London, 1985), 22-58; Raymond A. Mentzer, Jr., 'The Self-Image of the Magistrate in Sixteenth-Century France', *Criminal Justice Hist.* 5 (1984), 36 (on a woodcut of a condemnation scene from Jean Millcs de Sou vigny's *Praxis criminis persequendi* Mentzer comments that its frontal orientation and symmetry 'call to mind popular Northern European Last Judgment imagery'*); Jean-Louis Biget, Jean-Claude Hervé, and Yvon Thébert, 'Expressions iconographiques el monumentales du pouvoir d'état cn France et cn Espagne à la fin du moyen âge: L'Exemple d'Albi et de Grenade', in *Culture et ideologic dans lagenèse de I'etat modemé* (Ecole Franyaise de Rome, Rome, 1985), 256-63, esp. 261: 'Au moment où l'État sc manifestc sous la forme d'une justice supéricure à toutes les autres et de plus cn plus active, le Jugement de Dieu prend une importance nouvelle ... Comme la chasse aux sorcières, il coincide chronologiquemcnt avec le premier cssor de la monarchie administrative.*

[24] Weber, *Economy and Society,* iii.16.

[25] Robert Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water: The Medieval Judicial Ordeal* (London, 1986), 144-52; cf. Henry C. Lea, *Superstition and Force: Essays on the Wager of Law—the Wager of Battle—the Ordeal—Torture,* 3rd edn. (Philadelphia, 1878), 279-94.1 have preferred Bartlett's account to that of Charles M. Radding, 'Superstition to Science: Nature, Fortune, and the Passing of the Medieval Ordeal', *American Hist.* 7?rv. 84 (1979),945-69.

The *jus cruentalionis cadaveri* seems to have fared better, being acknowledged by theorists as well as resorted to by investigating magistrates. In England, the ‘corps bleeding upon the Witches touch’ was given as a probable sign of witchcraft by one authority, and as a proof by another.[30] King James cited its use (in cases involving secret murders) as a ‘secret super-naturall signe’, in order to back up his support for the water ordeal.[31] When Janet Preston, one of the defendants in the trials at Lancaster in 1612, touched the corpse of Master Lister, it bled freshly, confirming Thomas Potts’s view that this had ‘ever beene held a great argument to induce a Jurie

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“ Unsworth, ‘Witchcraft Beliefs and Criminal Procedure’, 83—7,96-8, citing the manifestation of the supernatural bodily properties of the witch in the various forms of ordeal re-employed in English justice.

n Hans von Fehr, ‘Gottesurteil und Folter. Eine Studie zur Dämonologie des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit’, in *Festgabefur Rudolf* Stamw/rr (Berlin and Leipzig, 1926), 232-6.

“ Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water,* 146,150. For typical opponents, see Binsfeld, *Tractatus,* 287-94, remarking on its frequency in Westphalia and the Rhineland; Perkins, *Discourse,* 206-8; Weyer, *Depraestigiis daemonum,* 500; Cotta, *Triallofwitch-craft,* 104-14; Bernard, *Guide to grand-jury men,* 209-11; Hermann Neuwaldt, *Exegesis purgationis site examinis sagarum super aquam frigidam proiectarum* (Helmstadt, 1584).

[29] On the water ordeal in France, sec Mandrou, *Magistrals et sorciers,* 102—3; *Soman, Sorcellerieetjustice criminelle,* xii, 180-3,186,192; xiv, 26 (stressing popular support but disapproval by higher courts). For England, see *Witches apprehended, examined and executed, for notable villanies by them committed both by land and water. With a strange and most true trial how to know whether a woman be a witch or not* (London, 1613), in Rosen (ed.), *Witchcraft,* 331-43; *The witches of Northamptonshire* (London, 1612), when the local JPs ordered the swimming test (see repr. in Rosen (ed.), *Witchcraft,* 349-50); G. L. Kittredge,
tn Old and New England (reissued, New York, 1958), 235-38 (and 539-44 for
demonology of the subject); Holmes, ‘Popular Culture?’, 104-5. For
prozesse in Deutschland, 47-8; Van Dülmen, *Theatre of Horror,* 15. For
where its history was more erratic and its
Ordeal by Water
Maia Madar, ‘Estonia I:
craft, 266.

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to hold him guiltic that shall be accused of Murther, and hath seidome, or never, fa}' led the Tryall',[32] Likewise, in the Ariege in the 1560s, local *consuls*—treating their responsibilities to uphold the moral order as a form of piety, lest God punish them and their communities for laxity— expected his direct intervention in witchcraft cases. After the death of Gabrielle de La Serre, they arranged for all her female neighbours to walk past her body in the hope ‘that God would show some miracle’ by making it respond to the proximity of the guilty witch. On another occasion the corpse of a child of two months immediately bled through the nose when the witch suspected of causing its death entered the house and approached the cradle.[33] In the Rhineland and elsewhere in Germany, similar practices were reported by Pierre Binsfcld and the jurist Justus Oldekop.[34]

The application of red-hot irons, the tests to see whether witches could say the Lord’s Prayer or the Creed correctly or shed tears, even the pricking of them with needles to sec if they bled; all were further forms of ordeal and indicate the ‘re-enchantment’ of justice in witchcraft cases.[35] But torture too could take on this character.[36] In some of the Catholic areas of Germany judicial decision-making in cases of witchcraft depended in part on the view that torture was an occasion for revelations of the divine will. Interrogations of witches undergoing it often took the form of judicial duels between the godly magistrate and Satan, in which, following the advice given in the *Malleus maleficarum,* holy objects were deployed as exorcistic weapons and suspects (like contemporary demoniacs) drank holy water to fortify them. When the accused were actually beaten with heavy candles it becomes difficult to say just what was going on—whether a torture, an exorcism, or an ordeal. If, for instance, torture was seen sincerely as a way of breaking the devil’s hold over a suspect as an obstacle to confession *(ein damonenbefreiendes Instrument),* and if it was seen even by those tortured as a proof of innocence as well as of guilt, in which God either gave or withheld the resolution to withstand according to the truth of the matter, then we

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n Potts, *Wonderfull discovery of witches,* 179, see also 185.

” J.-F. Lc Nail, ‘Procedures contre des sorcieres de Seix en 1562*, *Bulletin de la Societe arie'goise,* 31 (1976), 182-5.

* Binsfcld, *Tractatus,* 110-12; Oldekop, *Cautelarum criminalium,* 54-5. Further examples in Lea, *Superstition and Force,* 315-23; H. Platelle, ‘La Voix du sang. Le Cadavre qui saigne en presence de son meurtrier’, in *La Piete populaire au Moyen Age. Actes du 99' congres dessocietls savantes* (Paris, 1977), 161-79. There is a summary of contemporary views on this ordeal in Eberhard Rudolph Roth, *praeses* (Melchior Fridericus Geuder, *responded), De probation per cruentationem cadaverum vulgo Baarrecht* (Ulm, 1684). Alain Boureau, *Le Simple Corps du roi: ^Impossible Sacralite des souverains franfais* xr-xvnr siedc (Paris, 1988), 59, allows for the jurists’ codification of Teprcuye de cruentation du cadavre’ in the 16th c. but denies its character as an ordeal. Aitchison Robertson, ‘Bier-Right*, 192, sap it w’as ‘in use up to 1687, running alongside the tests for witchcraft*.

” The label is Unsworth’s; see ‘Witchcraft Beliefs and Criminal Procedure’, 96. Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum,* 151-60, spoke of purgation by fire as a ‘vulgar’ proof but went on approvingly to give examples of its use in other cases; trial by single combat was, however, ‘contrary to natural law’ (149); Boguet, *Examen of Witches,* 216, attacked the use of red-hot irons as well as the water ordeal. For the Lord’s Prayer ordeal, sec Gian *vi\l, Saducismustriumphatus, 377.* TCUT u • D

M For the affinity between torture and physically discomforting ordeals, see John H. Langbein, *Prosecuting Crime in the Renaissance: England, Germany, France* (Cambridge, Mass., 1974), 152 (citing Eberhard Schmidt, *Inquisitionsprozess undRezeption* (Leipzig, 1940), 56-61).

should beware of thinking of it solely in secular and ultimately negative terms as simply a piece of sadistic barbarism. Revelation is not, after all, falsifiable.[37]

What seems to be important here is, again, the working out of notions of authority that pitted magistrates and witches against each other as competitors for the same kind of power. In Catholic Bavaria, Adam Tanner, who was worried by excessive rigour in witchcraft trials, still spoke of them as a 'contest *(ptigna)'* between judges and devils, and insisted, in consequence, on the highest levels of judicial piety, as well as learning and prudence?[8] In Catholic guides to the conduct of investigations it was suggested that the problem of witches using charms to make themselves insensible to the severest torture could be overcome if even secular judges employed clerical and sacramental remedies. They were recommended, for example, to hang a wax Agnus Dei around the witch's neck and to sprinkle blessed salt and holy water in the torture chamber and examination room, and to have a priest conduct exorcisms of both the accused themselves and their houses?[9] In the 1630s, Johann Matthäus Meyfart reported that in Lutheran Coburg suspects were being 'purified' with incense and holy water and marked with the sign of the cross.[40] An individual example from France is that of Urbain Grandier, who was reported to have refused to drink holy water or call on Christ when being tortured, even though he was encouraged to do so.[41] There are indications, then, that the institutional distinction between ecclesiastical and secular jurisdictions, on which historians of the witch trials have hitherto relied, may not necessarily have led to altogether different styles of conducting actual trials.

Those who attacked ordeals and these other sacraments of justice, besides testifying to their actual use, saw in them only competing supernaturalisms. The French jurist Louis Servin dismissed the swimming of witches as 'a counter magic'?[2] In 1635 the Leipzig jurist Benedikt Carpzov complained that the proposals of Marsiliis and Grillando were as diabolical as the charms they were designed to combat, there being no power in the mere recitation of words to drive away magic and only ‘wicked superstition’ in the belief that there was. This is the remark of a Lutheran directed against Catholic colleagues, but it does imply the kind of inverse correspondence between magistracy and witchcraft that the modern sociology* of charisma seems to require—as well as signalling its decline.[43]

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[37] F. Merzbacher, D/e *Hexenprozesse in Franken* (Munich, 1970), 140-9; G. Schormann, *Hexenprozesse in Nordwestdeutschland* (I Iildesheim, 1977), 118-24. This material was conveniently summarized for me in \\ alinski-Kiehl, Judicial Torture, Confessional Absolutism and Witch-Hunting in Early Modern Germany . Cf. Mandrou,AM^jj/ra/jr/rornrn, 103-4; *KAMS. Servants of Satan.* 152-5; Van Dülmen, *Theatre of Horror.* 17-22; Fehr, 'Gottcsurtcil und Foltcr', 237-54; Kunze, *Highroad to the Stake.* 180 (for the inscription J.H.S., the Greek abbreviation for Christ, written at the head of the list of questions for an interrogation), 195, 329-32, 351-3. For the theory of rituals in torture, see [Kramer and Sprengcr], *Malleus maleficarum.* 480-1, and for cases where the devil appeared to help suspects undergo torture, see Remy, *Demonolatry.* 164-5 (repeated by Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum.* 133-1). The criticisms of Spee are again relevant here; see *Cautio criminalis.* 165-6.

[31] *Tinner. Tractatus theologicus. 44.*

” *Anon., Processus juridicus. 59-63;* Waitzenegger, *Disputatio iuridica.* 52. There is an illustration of Just SL -f • courtroom .cxor7 S2!.n H5rmann L6hcr» *Hochndtige, unterthanige wemutige Klage derfrommen* **Unschuttigen** (Amsterdam, 1676), facing p. 44, reproduced in Rainer Decker, 'Die Hexenverfolgungen im Hcrzagtum Westfalen , *Westfalische Zeitschrift.* 131-2 (1981-2), facing p. 352. Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum.* 56, cited a case from Amiens in 1599 where the pain of torture was only felt once 'a waxen image of the Blessed Lamb' was placed round the accused's neck. For a later text of 1696, still encouraging these practices, see Lea, *Materials,* iii. 1095.

[40] Meyfart, *Hochirichtige Hexen-Erinnerung.* 192; for the Spanish Netherlands, see Muchembled *La Sorcière.* 86.

[41] *The history of the devils ofLoudun.* trans, and cd. E. Goldsmid (3 pts. in 1 vol.; Edinburgh 1887-8) pt. 3,14 (a trans, of Des Niau, *La veritable histoire des diables de Loudun.* (Poitiers, 1634)).

[42] Louis Servin, *Actions notables etplaidoyez* (2 vols.; Rouen, 1629), i. 221 (cited Bartlett, *Trial by Fire*

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However fragmentary our knowledge of such details and their symbolic overtones may still be, they* help to illustrate the assumptions about authority that I have been examining. They point again to the sacrosanctity of magistracy and justice, and to the idea that judges should punish witches with a quasi-sacerdotal assurance that they were fulfilling a divine calling. It was for this reason that Delcambre called the zeal of the Lorraine witch trial magistrates ‘apostolic’ and likened their judicial exhortations to homilies and sermons; for this reason, too, that Maximilian I of Bavaria, who added ‘by the grace of God’ to his ducal title, took a personal interest in the prosecution of witches.[44] Above all, these aspects of witchcraft trials and investigations conform to the expectations aroused when we think in ideal-typical terms of the ‘charisma of office’. Weber abstracted this notion from historical circumstances mainly in terms of its origin as a divine gift, its ability to separate rulers from ruled on qualitative grounds, and its expression in qualities or deeds which were so exceptional as to be thought ‘magical’ or ‘supernatural’. And each of these principal features applies well to the concepts actually at work both in the pages of the witchcraft theorists and (as far as we can tell) in the actual conduct of some witchcraft trials. But in the process of analytical refinement Weber proposed other derivations from his pure form which may now seem equally suggestive.

For example, he identified the need for those with charismatic authority to continue to authenticate their powers lest they eventually forfeit allegiance. He who claims the power of magic (he argued) rules by giving signs that it still works; such authority threatens to disappear, ‘as soon as proof is lacking and as soon as the charismatically qualified person appears to be devoid of his magical power or forsaken by his god’.[45] And one at least of the expected benefits (derived from the stereotypical case of the prophet) was ‘liberation from fear of noxious spirits and bad magic of any sort. ... That Christ broke the power of the demons by the force of his spirit and redeemed his followers from their control was, in the early period of Christianity,

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and Water. 148); Hemmingsen, *Admonitio*, sig. I8^{r}; Hocker, *Der teufe!selbs.* fo. cxxi^{r}; Remy, *Demonolatry.* 167—70; Fachineus, *praescs. Disputatiojuridica, de male/icis etsagis.* 23—4.

[41] Carpzov, *Praclicae novae,* pt. 3, 221-2; Hippolytus de Marsiliis, *Practica causarum criminalium* (Lyons, 1542),Vos. xxxi’-xxxii^{r}; Paolo Grillando, *De questionibus et tortura tractatus.* pub. with id., *Tractatus de hereticis et sortilegiis* (Lyons, 1536), fo. c’. e .. e .

[44] On Maximilian, see Kunze, *Highroad to the Stake.* 16,22,98-9,113, see also 304-5, on his father Duke William V.

[45] *From Max Weber.* 296; cf. Weber, *Economy and Society,* iii. 1112-13,1114.

one of the most important and influential of its messages.’[46] Weber also considered the possibility of contested charisma, which, since it threatens the correct identification of the ‘chosen’ ruler, has to be either tabooed or hidden artificially by devices for securing unanimity; otherwise, it ‘can be corrected only by Divine judgement as revealed in the outcome of a physical or magical combat.’[47] And finally, he spoke of bearers of charisma as ‘the “natural” leaders in moments of distress’, a remark suggesting that in extraordinary social situations those with extraordinary powers and a sense of divine mission enjoy the greatest prestige. Here too the occasions for anxiety might be demonic: ‘The charisma of the hero or the magician is immediately activated whenever an extraordinary event occurs: a major hunting expedition, or drought or some other danger precipitated by the wrath of the demons or especially a military threat.’[48]

Here, as before, we cannot expect an exact correspondence between an analytical model and a historical case—especially where charisma is in a vestigial rather than an original state. Yet demonism (like heresy and sacrilege) can threaten *only* in the realm of charisma; it is not a danger to tradition, nor to the propriety of legal rules. And in early modern Europe it was thought of as one of the greatest menaces men in authority had ever faced. It seems reasonable to suppose, therefore, that in so far as this authority did conform to the charismatic type, it might be authenticated most successfully in opposition to demonism. We have seen that sorcery was deemed an appropriate foil for the prophets of the Old and New Testament and for the emperors and saints of Late Antiquity, and it has been again for those who have emerged in the traditional societies of North America and Africa. In both cases, they marked their superiority by remaining immune from sorcery’s power, destroying its practitioners, and exorcizing its victims.[49] Might not witch trials have offered the early modern magistrate too—and, indeed, a prophet-like witch finder like Matthew Hopkins[50]—a significant opportunity for proving himself in the Weberian sense? For witches and demons (like sorcerers) were also ‘endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities’—antitypes, as it were, of the official versions. Speaking of the latter, Weber wrote, ‘When such an authority comes into conflict with the competing authority of another who also

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“ Weber, *Economy and Society,* ii. 527; for this and other religious contexts used by Weber, see E. San Juan.Jr.,‘Orientations of Max Weber’s Concept of Charisma’, *Centennial Rev.* 11 (1967). 270-85.

n Weber, *Economy and Society,* iii. 1126.

“ Ibid. iii. 1111-12,1134; cf. Schweitzer, ‘Theory and Political Charisma’, 153; Tucker, ‘Theory of Charismatic Leadership’, 742-8.

** Wilson, *Noble Savages.* 47-82.

[50] John Gaule reported that the ‘country people’ saw Hopkins as having ‘infallible and wonderfull power’, above even that of God, Christ, or the Gospel. While not allowing it in this particular case, Gaule made the Hopkins episode the occasion for these reflections on charismatic authority: ‘1. The Extraordinarily Called, are raised and separated, immediately, eminently, miraculously: 2. And that upon extraordinary occasions; as when the Church of God is thereby extreamely infested, infected, obscured, endangered. 3. Such are evermore by God prepared, gifted, strengthened, maintained, perfected.’ See *Cases ofconscience.* 96-7, and Baroja, *World ofthe Witches.* 204. For the charisma of an Italian witch finder, see Camporesi, *Incorruptible Flesh.* 55.

claims charismatic sanction, the only recourse is to some kind of a contest, by magical means or an actual physical battle of the leaders.'[51] In this light, magistrates wielded an official charisma, designated as truly sacred by the preferences of a political culture, witches, its unofficial and, so to speak, profane equivalent. Witches were bearers, indeed, of what, in modern analysis, has been called 'negative charisma'.[52] Armed with the principle of inviolability—with a kind of beneficent sorcery—the godly magistrate was expected to survive his encounter with them unscathed and victorious, like some political shaman. The fact that he did so could still buttress his claims to legitimacy and those of the system of authority of which he was a part, as well as confirming an overall political cosmology. It indicated supernatural, not merely social or intellectual, superiority. As Delcambre wrote of the Lorraine judges: 'representatives of God, the origin of all justice, they thought of themselves as stronger than Hell.'[53] *

Moreover, if the perception of large-scale disorder and the anxieties it brings warrant the resort to charismatic saviours with dramatic solutions, this might also help to explain the enthusiastic appeals which writers of demonology addressed to the judicial classes. To what was seen as an extreme situation, a deep moral crisis, magistrates brought at least the vestiges of a reassuring exceptional power; the supreme magistrate, said the witchcraft author Hinrich Rimphoff, was *legibtis solutus.*™ Edward Shils has argued that the charismatic propensity is always essentially 'a function of the need for order' and that any substantial power to create and conserve it in line with transcendent norms will attract deference—including that which is enacted judicially. In consequence it permeates, in an attenuated and diffuse form, the routine institutional arrangements of even quite secularized societies.[55] But order was a particular preoccupation of the Europe of the witch trials, and the power to secure it was thought to be directly continuous with the divine will. Here the ordering authority of magistrates was felt with some intensity.[56] We have seen that they could behave in a quasi-priestly manner, and we know that (in the broad if not the narrow sense) they administered the law of a prophet. Weber himself spoke of judicial heroism as fit for the charismatic hero.[57] Would it be too fanciful to apply the charisma of the hunt to the ‘hunting’ of witches? Jean Le Normant, at least, thought that Louis XIII had steeled himself for the combat against the witches of France by following the example of David; he had slain the ‘wolf’ and the ‘lion’ of contemporary magic.[58]

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[51] Weber, *Economy and Society.* i. 244.

« See the definition of David F. Aberlc, 'Rcligio-Magical Phenomena and Power, Prediction, and Control', *Southwestern J. Anthropology. 22* (1966), 226: 'We may speak of positive charisma when the charismatic person or office-holder is valued by those who endow him with charisma, and negative charisma when he is disvalued.... Such a negatively valued figure may be described, metaphorically or literally, by those who oppose him, in quasi-religious terms: as a living embodiment of the anti-Christ, devilish, the Devil himself, or as a preternaturally clever, or diabolically clever, enemy.' For an application to the Highland Chontai Indians of Oaxaca, Mexico, see Paul R. Turner, 'Witchcraft as Negative Chansma', *Ethnology.* 9 (1970), 366-72. Klaniczay, *Uses of Supernatural Power.* 7-9, makes the specific application of negative charisma to the early modern witch.

« Delcambre, 'Les Proces de sorcelleric cn Lorraine: Psychologic des juges, 392.

[14] Rimphoff, *Drachen-Konig.* 50-2.

[55] Shils, 'Charisma, Order, and Status', 203,204-9; cf. Wilson, *Noble Savages.* 26,79-32.

* Bouwsma, 'Lawyers and Early Modern Culture', 322, speaks of early modern legal systems functioning 'above all as a source of order for society in general.'

[57] Weber, *Economy and Society,* iii. 1116.

If early modern magistracy was indeed something of an amalgam of these charismatic roles—if, as Pierre Goubert has said, the king was ‘giver of justice, saint, God, and great wizard all at once’[59]—this might account for the very strong sense of dualism and moral polarity both in judicial attitudes to witchcraft and in the elements of confrontation and competition in witch trials—where the efficacy of magisterial authority was as much ‘on trial’ as the power of the witch. In turn, the prosecuting of witches may very well have contributed to the general process whereby early modern forms of authority were recognized as valid by those who were subject to them. It was both a corollary and a confirmation of the belief in ‘the specific state of grace of a social institution’.[60] This would also help us to understand why those in power were often enthusiastic about it.

* * *

‘... resting on magical powers’. What Weber helps us again to underline, finally, is that sense of inverse correspondence—of both opposition and yet symmetry—between the powers of rulers and the powers of witches. As we have seen so many times in this study, demonology’ thrived, indeed, depended, on this kind of relationship. Provided that Christianity remained unchallenged as the source of transcendent political norms, there was only strength in the conviction that witches and magistrates were very different from each other and, at the same time, equivalents. Both the representation of witches as enemies of order and the godly duty to identify and punish them were assured as objective truths. When, however, judgements about statecraft were detached from Christian norms, or, more extreme still, the value of religion (*any* religion) to a ruler came to be seen as a matter of its pragmatic utility—when, that is, religious orthodoxy was relativized to the needs of policy—then inverse correspondence became more of a handicap. For now the charisma of magistracy was likely to seem less a real quality’ than an artificial one, and the awfulness of witchcraft to be not inherent in the crime but a projection of a rivalry born of competing claims to the same sort of power.

From one direction in particular came arguments about rulership that were sufficiently cynical about political supernaturalism to spell the eventual intellectual ruin of both magisterial hostility to witches and the sense of superiority on which it was based. This was the debate about Machiavellism that ran through the political discourse of the entire period, but was especially prominent, for example, in the years following the St Bartholomew’s Day massacres, in the attacks on epicureanism and libertinism in early seventeenth-century France, and in the debates about religion and ‘policy’ in Jacobean England.[61] It was not difficult to condemn Machiavelli’s celebrated statements about the religion of the Romans—above all, his view that it had been conspicuously successful in what its founder, Numa, had intended it for, that is, maintaining the unity, obedience, and commitment of the citizens. The elements of magic in what Machiavelli depicted could also not fail to arouse adverse comment, they included Numa's pretence that he held 'private conferences with a nymph who advised him about the advice he should give to the people',[62] the basis of Gentile religion in oracles and augury, the deliberate fostering of superstition by miracle-mongering, and so on.

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[58] See above, Ch. 25.

[59] Pierre Goubert, *L'Ancien Regime* (2 vols.; Paris, 1969-73), ii. 28.

[60] Weber, *Economy and Society*, in. 1140.

[61] On the latter, see Felix Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli: A Changing Interpretation 1500-1700* (London, 1964), 77-101.

Nevertheless, the general recommendations regarding the manipulation of the supernatural by rulers could be disturbing. 'Nor in fact was there ever a legislator', declared Machiavelli, 'who, in introducing extraordinary laws to a people, did not have recourse to God, for otherwise they would not have been accepted.' All princes, he added, should maintain religion, even if they believed the means for doing so to be false or spurious. Such was indeed the case with many miracles, but this did not stop them having a vital political role.[63] These views scandalized orthodox post-Reformation opinion, with its commitment to the idea that only believers in the right religion could make good citizens. But the question of the social and political functions of religious belief was nevertheless 'a matter of open debate'in the age of Machiavelli,[64] and whenever anti-Machiavellism was subsequently expressed it received further airing. The notion that religion had been invented 'to keep men in awe' eventually became a common seventeenth-century talking point, particularly in England during the 1640s and 1650s, when it received considerable support from political radicals, as well as being ascribed to a wide range of'atheists' and 'materialists'. 'It seems to acquire', Stephen Greenblatt has suggested, 'a special force and currency in the Renaissance as an aspect of a heightened consciousness, fueled by the period's prolonged crises of doctrine and church government, of the social function of religious belief.'[65]

Thus the very prevalence of this despised notion may have acted (as did its presence in the single text of Thomas Harriot's account of Virginia) like an 'invisible bullet' to subvert the transcendental authority of religion at the very moments when the latter was being defended.[66] There is nothing, after all, to distinguish these two passages:

> **the more subtle and practis'd Lawgivers knowing that the readiest way to gain Authority!,] amongst the people and to continue it, was to persuade them that they were only the Instruments of some Supreme diety [«c], who was pleased to favour them with its assistance and protection, have not unsuccesscfully father'd all upon feigned Dieties [sic], pretended Conferences, imaginary Apparaitions, and in a word, this Magick of the Ancients, the better to palliate their ambition, and to lay a surer foundation of future Empire.**

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u *The Discourses ofNiccolo'Machiavelli,* ed. and trans. Leslie J. Walker (2 vols.; London, 1950), i. 241.

*' Ibid. 241-6 (quotation at 241).

“ Wootton,'Fear ofGod in Early Modern Political Theory 60.

“ Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations,* 24.

[66] On Harriot, see ibid. 21-39.

Great Men have anciently made use of Superstition ... to authorize their Laws animate their People and keep them in Subjection and Obedience; to this end they feigned Dreams and Divine Revelations, and pretended to have private Conference with the Gods.

The first was written by the *libertin* Gabriel Naude in a chapter, indebted to Machiavelli, on the attribution of magic to 'politicians',[67] and the second by the very un-*libertin* Diego de Saavedra Fajardo, in an immensely popular and much reprinted book of political emblems intended for a son of Philip IV of Spain and directed explicitly against Machiavellism in statecraft.[68] All the same, the difference between them, as well as between pagan and Christian political values, is likely to seem purely cultural to the modern historian.

Indeed, it seemed so to some other contemporaries too, with important consequences for demonology. In England, for example, there were those who, like Naude (whose *Apologie* appeared in English in 1657), spoke of the exploitation of magic in pagan politics, but in the context of their scepticism about contemporary witchcraft and witch-hunting. 'The manner of Heathen Kings', wrote Thomas Ady on the subject of charms, 'was, to strengthen themselves in their Kingdom... by these Inchantments, supposing, that if their enchanting false Prophets ... did but utter their Inchantments, (being pretended Prophecies, and cursings artificially composed) against their enemies, that then their enemies should fall before them.'[69] When Joseph Glanvill came to rebut the doubts about the reality of witchcraft circulating in Restoration England he acknowledged that they arose (in part) from the suspicion that priests and politicians, with their 'juggles and contrivances', had invented the crime in order to frighten people into compliance.[70]

Glanvill no doubt had in mind John Wagstaffe, who was certainly capable of unmasking the utility of witchcraft beliefs to would-be charismatic rulers, and, indeed, attributed the very origin and nature of such beliefs to 'Politique interest'. This was a motive that had been ascribed, for some time, to those who supposedly adopted religious doctrines not for their intrinsic moral worth but for the instrumental advantages that might accrue.'[1] In 1669 Wagstaffc took the novel step of making it the centre-piece of his hostility to witchcraft beliefs. It was only an instance of a general principle, which he expressed as his methodology: 'Now this is certain that in the sayings and actions of men, whereas we desire a true estimate, we ought chiefly to consider, *Cui bono,* that is for what end or advantage they were said and done.'[71] [72] Wagstaffc's answer was that witchcraft was defined into being in order to maintain the charismatic pretensions of heathen rulers and their priestly supporters, and then perpetuated as a convenient form of deviance by their medieval and early modern counterparts.

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[67] Gabriel Naude, *The history of magick by way of apology*, trans. John Davies (London, 1657), 24-5; first publ. in 1625 as *Apologie pour tous les grands personnages qui ont esté faussement soupçonnez de magie*. For a discussion of this passage, and its indebtedness to Machiavelli, see Peter S. Donaldson, *Machiavelli and Mystery of State* (Cambridge, 1988) 148-54. For remarks similar to Naude's in Vanini's *De admirandis naturae* (1616), see William L. Hine, Mersenne and Vanini', *Renaissance Quart.* 29 (1976), 65. Naude's scepticism concerning the witches' sabbat is mentioned by Mandrou, *Magistrals et sorciers,* 336.

[68] Diego de Saavedro Fajardo, *The royal politician represented in one hundred emblems,* trans. James Asto; (2 vols.; London, 1700), i. 200. For a striking example from a Jacobean assize sermon, see William pickinson, [illegible] *downe in a sermon preached before the reverend judges at the assizes held in Reading for the county of Berks, June 28 1619 (London,* 1619) sig C3'-

[69] Ady, *Candle in the dark,* 50; cf. Bekker, *World bewitch'd,* 97; 'anciently, the Magi and Diviners, were found amongst the King's Attendants, and in the Temples, as are still at this day the Brainines, in the East-Indies, the Fetisseros in Guinea, the Baivas or Piais in Peru, and the Country of the Cannibals, etc. and several others of the same quality, so that no body is acknowledg'd for Wise, Doctor, Priest, Prophet, nor becomes Counsellor *of* State, unless he be Diviner or Magician, in the sense that has been set down.' Antonius van Dale, cited by Bekker as an ally, also spoke of the political uses of oracles in ancient religion; see his *The history of oracles.* 93-101.

[70] Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus* sig. Rp (i.e. 258, unpaginated in 'The Preface' to pt. 2).

The 'absolute and unlimited power' of the ancient monarchies, he again argued, was based on superstition as well as arms. Magical legerdemain or 'juggling' and counterfeit miracles and prophecies made up the repertoire of 'impostures' of the pagan clergy, and these were the all-too human delusions (not witchcraft as anything real or demonic) that the Israelites were forbidden to practise by their laws. In effect, Wagstaffc proposed, the pagan priests and the 'wise Politicians' of old had simply taken advantage of human folly and passion, turning the apparitions of the sick and fearful into 'spirits' and the wonders of nature and its calamities into 'demonic' dangers, and then offering the 'Rites or Ceremonies' of religious worship as protection. This was an account derived, presumably, from Hobbes, for whom the faulty perceptions of the earliest peoples, and the fears they aroused, had 'given occasion to the Governours of the Heathen Common-wealths to regulate this their fear, by establishing that Daemonology ... to the Publique Peace, and to the Obedience of Subjects necessary thereunto'.[73] What Wagstaffc had in mind, evidently, was the religion of the Egyptians and the philosophy of the Platonists. In time, these were imitated and, thus, threatened by private enterprise, by individuals 'with a greedy desire of gain ... Liars, Mountebanks in Divinity and Physick', who set themselves up as alternative therapists dealing with the same fears and afflictions. And from this rivalry for power came the labelling of religious dissidence. In its resentment of competition, the priesthood simply declared:

> That all such as invaded sacred things, contrary to the due Rites and Ceremonies, were so far from any Communion with the Gods, that they were rather abandoned by them, and exposed unto the society of evil Spirits; by which Conversation they became full of malice, and all sorts of vice and mischief, like unto the Devils with whom they conversed.

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[71] See, for example, Thomas Fitzherbert, *The first part of a treatise concerning policy, and religion,* 2nd edn. (n.p. (London], 1615) sig. C1^{r}, who described 'politikes' as those who thought that religion was 'ordained only for the service of [the] commonwealth', and used it 'as nurses use fables of bug-beares to terrify litle children withal, to make them the more obedient; as though religion or beleefe of a God, were only a matter of opinion, consisting in phantasy, and imagination, and devised to keepe men in awe, and feare of eternal punishment, to make them the more obedient to temporal lawes'.

[72] Wagstaffc, *Question of witchcraft debated,* 124-5; I have benefited esp. from Hunter, 'The Witchcraft Controversy and the Nature of Free-Thought in Restoration England'.

[71] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan,* ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge, 1991), 441, and see also 477 for Hobbes's application of the principle of *cui bono* to demonology. Hobbes's treatment of demonology is analysed by Bostridge, 'Debates About Witchcraft', 56-82.

In a word, witches. There was no difference, Wagstaffe concluded, 'between the actions of the Phylosophical Heathen Priest, and the Magician or Witch, but only this, that the one had Law or Authority on his side, the other had not'.[74]

If 'witches' originated when priests denounced their private rivals, they developed fully when 'Priests of different Religions called one another so, and condemned one anothers religions'. Like some seventeenth-century Norman Cohn, Wagstaffe wrote of Jews who called Christians witches, of Christians (when they got the 'uppermost') who called heathens witches, and of inquisitors and Jesuits who called heretics and reformers witches. The medieval witch trials were to be understood against the background of the power struggles between the Empire and the Papacy, with the Inquisition seeking out witches to gratify 'the ambition and usurped Power of their Lord the Pope'. Confessions of witchcraft were dictated to the accused, thought Wagstaffe, by the inquisitors themselves, 'with a design to advance the reputation of the Virgin Mary, and the Sacraments of their own Church'.[75] It is not surprising that, like those sceptics mentioned in an earlier chapter, he scorned the sabbat as something manufactured to serve the needs of Catholic polemic.[76]

* * *

Although Wagstaffe ended by portraying witchcraft as an inter-confessional football, one of his major conclusions was that it had been religion acting in the 'Politique interest' of a certain style of ruler that had 'founded it on fables' in the first place. Together with his general cynicism concerning the roots of power and subordination, this argument represents, therefore, the ultimate challenge to a supernaturalism that opposed magistrates to witches on charismatic terms.[77] But looking back over the debates that began in earnest with Machiavelli's *Discorsi,* one cannot imagine even those who merely sympathized with the view that religion was another item of policy, let alone those who actually went to atheist, materialist, or Hobbesian lengths, paying the same very serious attention to witchcraft as those who did not. This also seems true of the intellectuals who presided over the change whereby politics itself was transformed from the art of good government to the implementation of 'reason of state', and, again, of those who nourished the Stoicism and scepticism (as well as reason of state) that contributed to the developments in early modern political culture recently described by Richard Tuck.[78] There were, so to speak, important differentials in attitudes to witchcraft across the range of attitudes to government. To identify in orthodox demonology the theoretical notions of authority that I have been exploring, is not, therefore, to obscure the historical significance of other kinds of political thought and action; it is only to isolate the traits that located demonology in one particular tradition of such thought and action, and helped to make it considerably less meaningful, or even irrelevant, in others. This can be illustrated if we turn from sociological theory to the intellectual history of early modern politics and contrast two of the conceptions of authority that dominated the age of the witch trials—one where charisma was eminently on display, and one where it was not.

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[74] Wagstaffe, *Question of witchcraft debated*, 127, 129-30, 131, 133.

[75] Ibid. 137, 62; see Ch 9 [illegible] (and cf. Scot's *Discoverie of witchcraft*, 259, for whom it was wealth that made the only difference: '...I saie, that the pope make rich witches, saints; and burneth the poore witches.'

[76] Wagstaffe, *Question of witchcraft debated*, 55-7, 69-76; Wagstaffe does not say this explicitly, but the ironic and sarcastic language he adopts in dealing with the sabbat implies this view of it, as does his opinion that the charges against witches in this respect were 'ridiculous' Cf. above Ch 9.

[77] There is evidence of its use in early 18th-C. witchcraft polemic in Bostridge, 'Debates about witchcraft', 190-1.

[78] Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics 1250-1600* (Cambridge, 1992), *passim*; Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government 1572-1651* (Cambridge, 1993), esp. 31-119.

40

Mystical Politics

> For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.
>
> (1 Samuel 15:23)

> Just as a painting, perfectly executed, represents its subject, and bears the features given to it by the painter, so the authority of the king is the image of God, and his power a gift that comes from him, by a special favour and from no one else, and cannot rest on the will of those who do not have it and know not how to dispose of it.
>
> (H. Du Boys, *De Porigine et autorité des roys)*

> ... and tho' a Witch be superscrib'd a Rebel in Physicks; yet reversing the Point,
> a Rebel is a Witch in Politicks. The one because acting aginst the Law of Nature:
> but the other because striving against Order, and Government.
>
> (Richard Franck,// *philosophical treatise ofthe original and production ofthings)*

MAX WEBER'S sociology is, therefore, of some help in isolating a model of authority in European demonology and identifying its essential traits. It would be too inflated to call this model a political theory that writers consciously sought to develop and refine. Yet their arguments could never be innocent of political values and they might be the occasion for speculation about the nature of obligating rulership, its whereabouts, and its proper legitimation—in which case, a solution couched in the language of charisma was the most likely outcome. For the most part, we can speak of a set of beliefs and assumptions concerning charismatic authority which, acting as the presuppositions of what was said, made sense of the prosecution of witches as a political duty of magistrates. Thus the Rémy who defended withcraft trials by arguing that magistrates were God's agents on earth, and, so, sacrosanct, was the Rémy who told the local *advocats* at the opening of the *plaidoiries* of the duchy of Lorraine in 1597 that their oath enjoined reverence to the judiciary, that their courts were 'temples' and 'sanctuaries', and (quoting again Psalms 82:6) that judges were 'Gods' and represented 'the person of the sole emperor of the whole world'.[1]

But Weber also invites us to go beyond the demonological concept itself to the political culture that gave it credibility. His contention was that beliefs were constitutive of the power to command and the readiness to obey, and not mere reflections of them. The reality of a form of domination was not to be determined by sociologists but by the concepts in terms of which those involved thought of it and experienced it. Its essence (as Bryan Wilson has also stressed) was a relationship both social and intellectual; it was only viable at all in a historical setting which sustained the appropriate expectations. In this we recognize the Weber who argued, classically, that the aim *vfyerstehende Soziologic* was to grasp the subjective, yet socially shared meanings of actions, irrespective of any questions concerning their objective truth-value.[2] Charismatic authority was literally unthinkable outside a context of supernaturalism in society and politics, and yet for the same reason, readily intelligible within it. What I hope will also be recognized here is the strategy that has been attempted throughout this book—without which demonology too remains at the mercy of interpreters armed with pre-emptive models of rationality. It is Weber, then, who encourages us to look to those more general elements in early modern life and thought associated with the notion of political charisma. But in doing so we move (for the last time) in a familiar direction—from the intellectual terrain of demonology itself to the cultural environs that surrounded and sustained it.

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[1] **Rémy, *Remonstrance.* 698-702.**

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Here, as elsewhere, the issues were important enough to take central place in the debates that occupied intelligent Europeans. Indeed, we seem to be faced not with unfamiliar notions but with tedious commonplaces. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the attempt to differentiate leaders from led on the grounds of supernatural endowments could only mean one thing. And the insistence with which the powers that be were said to be ordained by God seems almost to have trivialized the notion. Even Machiavelli, who otherwise dispensed with it, applied it to ‘ecclesiastical principalities’. For other than Machiavellians it was less a defensible position than an unquestioned premiss. ‘The mindes of every man’, it was said, ‘ought to be firmely and stcdfastly resolved that God is the author of all politick governements.’[3]

Strictly speaking, this implied nothing about the original whereabouts of power, or the means by which this was given into the hands of rulers. For a long time, therefore, the idea of the godliness of authority was compatible with theories of government which traced rulership to human artifice via the promptings of conscience and right reason. No Thomist, for example, could abandon divine will as the original efficient cause of the polity, however remotely related to its matter and form. Early theorists of resistance of all religious persuasions also needed elements of political providentialism to underpin both the resort to *saltispopuli* and the appeal to the inferior, but still divinely inspired, magistrate. And until Pufendorf finally killed it in the 1670s, the idea that God was the mediate source of the authority that men located in their own immediate institutional creations was still to be found among the natural law theorists. *Ex post facto* the Almighty might agree to anything: ‘Power is originally inherent in the people’, wrote Henry Parker in 1642, ‘... and when by such or such a Law of common consent and agreement, it is derived into such and such hands, God confirms that Law: and so man is the free and voluntary Author, the Law is the

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[2] Max Weber, *Max Weber: The Theory of Social and Economic* Organization, trans. A.M‹ ^C?,dc? on and Talcott Parsons, ed. with an intro, by Talcott Parsons (Glencoe Ill., 1947), 87-9;AVikon *Noble Sai ages.* 3-7,14-24,94, but beware his remark that charismatic political solutions are not real ones (p. 101).

[3] La Noue, *Politicize and militane discourses.* 1.

Instrument, and God is the establisher of both.’[4] What was true of authority was also true of subjection. Divine commands to obey constituted authority could be laid on subjects irrespective of how that authority was derived. According to another Civil War theorist, ‘divinity’ gave ‘oncly generail rules of obedience to all lawful authority, [and] tels us not where that authority is, as in its adaequat subject, or how tempered or qualified.’[5] The important general point is that, in the Europe of the witch trials, ‘divinity’ was very often assumed to be an element in *all* kinds of rights and obligations. J. W. Allen (whose insight this is) wrote: ‘Theories of divine right exist everywhere in the structure of sixteenth-century thought.’[6] In these circumstances, to say that the politics of the writers of demonology was a reflection of general tastes is undoubtedly true; but only because it runs the risk of being truistic.

On the other hand, as soon as we think strictly about charisma, important lines of division begin to emerge. Authority that originates in a gift of grace lies outside the intentions of human agents, however much their natural instincts drive them towards sociability; and the fact that they accept it solely on the evidence of its supernatural qualities and powers makes the language of social contract or of popular sovereignty quite redundant. Ultimately this means that it is incompatible with those elements in early modern politics that historians have dubbed ‘constitutionalist’. Even in its mildest form—in the writings of Claude de Seyssel, let us say—constitutionalism was committed to the normative value of human institutions and traditions. It also owed much to the rehabilitation of human reason. For the Thomists, for example, political society lay within the capabilities of men and the foundation of domination was in nature, not in grace. Franciscus Suarez thought it an error to say that ‘political power presupposes either faith or any other supernatural gift in the prince possessing it ... the power is created in a purely natural way without ever being directed to supernatural ends.’[7] In the 1570s the Huguenot resistance theorists also crossed what has been called ‘a crucial conceptual divide’ in Protestant political theory.[8] They rejected the traditional assumption that the highest political authority arose from divine ordination; and despite some lingering commitment to it in their writings they also moved beyond the idea that resistance must focus on divinely mandated inferior magistrates and bear the character of a religious duty. The trend was in fact towards a secular and naturalistic account of the commonwealth, with the remedies for tyranny lying in the institutional safeguards that men, not God, had set up. For Theodore Bcza, for the author of the *Vindiciae contra tyrannos,* and for the other ‘monarchomachs’, legitimate political society came into being only when men, living in a state of natural liberty, and acting for reasons of utility, freely agreed to delegate their sovereignty to rulers while yet reserving the collective right to remove them if they were not conducive to the common good.

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[4] Henry *PuVn, Observations upon some of his Majesties late answers and expresses* (London, 1642), 1. For other examples (from England in 1642) of the •distinction between political power in the abstract and pohuca power as it appears in various.forms’, seejohn Anderson, *'But the People's Creatures': The Philosophical Basu ofthe English Civil War* (Manchester, 1989), 17-18.

[5] Charles Herlc, *An answer to Doctor Feme *s reply* (London, 1643), 3.

[4] *J.* W. Allen, *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1928- rev edn 19S71 123; cf.J.N. Figgis, *The Divine Right of Kings,* intro. G.R.Elton(New York, 1965) 177-8 ’

’ Cited by Skinner, *Foundations,* ii. 167; for the Thomist political theorists of ‘the Counter-Reformation period, see ibid. n. 135-73.

* Ibid. ii. 338, and for the general account of the ‘monarchomach’ writers (on which I have relied) 302-48.

That this was very far from what St Paul (was thought to have) had in mind may be inferred from the way the Huguenots felt the need to single out his text for refutation or transformation. But natural law theory in general flourished at the expense of ideas about the directly divine origin of power (as opposed to indirect divine ordination—via natural reason—of government itself); at best it rendered them theoretically ‘colourless’. Of Althusius, for instance, it has been said that all the references to divine participation in the origins and workings of the polity could be removed from his *Politico methodice digesta* without making any real inroads in its arguments.[9] The language of natural right—in the sense of a right to dispose freely of something of which a man is naturally possessed—came to provide an increasingly popular alternative to the language of divine right, however much the natural order in general may have been derived from a heavenly model and the principle of sociability from divinely implanted instincts. And it proved to be critical for the way the obligation to obey was actually interpreted, whether an authority’s power to command was held on trust from men or from God.

Charismatic authority and the supernaturalism on which it depended were not, therefore, merely generalized clichés of early modern politics. Properly so called, they were associated with one particular tradition of thought and practice. For this tradition there is no single label; but its most important tendency was, as Robert Ecclcshall once put it, ‘to mystify political activity by removing it from the range of normal human competence’.[10] In this context, politics was, in principle, entirely a matter of (and here again it is important to restrict the notion to its technical meaning) charismata. All political forms originated with God and were bestowed on men as divine favours via the temporal authority of rulers acting in his image and as his lieutenants or viceregents. Power was ‘of God’, as the Caroline divine Henry Valentine put it, ‘not by way of permission, but of commission; not by way of Deficiency, but of Efficiency; not by way of sufferance, but of ordinance’.[11] The benefits of order and justice that attached to political life and the power and wisdom to achieve them (all of which were, again, divine gifts) could only be located in a form of rulership directly constituted by God; and the one he preferred mirrored his own style of government and the patterns of authority he had implanted throughout nature. If, as it was said, God was ‘Proto-rex’ and the king ‘Pro-rex’, there was clearly nothing contingent about monarchy being the best form of government, or the derivation of all lesser forms of magistracy from it.[12] In consequence, sovereigns and subjects were separated by an enormous qualitative divide; they were, as Charles I said in a famous phrase ‘clean different things’.[13] Kings were divine or at least quasi-divine, their persons rendered sacrosanct by their office. Their actions were limited only by divine and natural laws, for infractions of which they were responsible only in heaven. For subjects, the duty of obedience had much the same limits, but the painful consequences of any allowable non-compliance were more immediately felt.

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[9] Otto von Gierke, *The Development of Political Theory,* trans. Bernard Freyd (London, 1939), 77-6. Gierke’s chapter ‘Religious Elements in the Theory’ of the Sure’ gives a classic account of the displacement of theocratic by naturalistic arguments concerning authority, pp. 71-90.

[10] Robert Eccleshall, *Order and Reason in Politics: Theories of Absolute and Limited Monarchy in Early Modern* Eng/dnJ(Oxford, 1978), 1, see also 32,76-96.

[11] Henry Valentine, *God save the king. A sermon preached in St. Pauls church the 27th. of March. 1639* (London, 1639), 3-4.

It is usual to think of this cluster of ideas as the intellectual corollary of royal absolutism and an expression, in particular, of that most masterly of‘master fictions’, the ‘divine right of kings’.[14] Although altogether different routes to absolutist conclusions later became possible, as the systems of Grotius, Hobbes, and Pufendorf show, this was the one that dominated in the hundred years either side of 1600. Needless to say, it was not derived entirely from considerations of charisma. As the example of Filmer alone shows, what Weber called ‘traditionalism’ was a further potent ingredient. But nowhere *else* is the charismatic element to be found. It is also usual to contrast it, at least analytically, with the sort of constitutionalism we noted earlier. In fact, the two tend to be seen as rivals in early modern political thought.[15] As we saw, the main stylistic trait of the constitutionalists was to place political responsibility in the community, whether as the originator of power, or (at least) one of its participants. Forms of government came to be judged on utilitarian grounds, not on their agreement with cosmological symmetries, and actual rulers were said to be hedged about with legal and institutional, and not merely moral, restrictions. Subjects had (corporately) a regulative and, in some versions, a directive control over the exercise of authority. Ultimately such ideas issued in doctrines of outright resistance.

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[12] The terms are from John Rawlinson, *Vivat rex. A sermon preached at Pauls Crosse on the day of his majesties happie inauguration, March 24 1614* (Oxford, 1619), 6. Cf. Michael Walzer (ed.), *Regicide and Revolution: Speeches at the Trial of Louis XVI,* trans. M. Rothstein (Cambridge, 1974), 15: ‘it is hard to imagine a politically active and interested God who works his will through Parliaments?

[12] C. C. Weston and J. R. Greenberg, *Subjects and Sovereigns: The Grand Controversy over Legal Sovereignty in Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1981), 2.

[14] On the history of‘divine right’ theory, see Figgis’s classic study *The Divine Right of Kings,* together with the works cited in the next note. I adopt the label ‘master fiction’ from Wilentz (ed.), *Rites of Power,* 4.

[15] Skinner, *Foundations,* ii. 113-14, describes the theory that all political authority inhered in the body of the people as the ‘greatest theoretical rival of absolutist ideology’, see also 347-8; Eccleshall, *Order and Reason,*1, speaks of‘two predominant styles of political thought in early modern England’. Other studies of English political thought which divide it between the two ideological traditions of absolutism and constitutionalism are Greenleaf, *Order, Empiricism and Politics,* see esp. 8—13; Weston and Greenberg, *Subjects and Sovereigns,* see esp. 1-7. The same language is adopted in the case of France by Julian H. Franklin, *Jean Bodin and the Rise of Absolutist Theory* (Cambridge, 1973), 1-22. W. F. Church, *Constitutional Thought in Sixteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, Mass., 1941) concentrates on the gradual substitution of a theory of absolutism for more traditional and constitutionalist concepts of royal authority and the rights of subjects; see esp. 3-21. For a more recent attempt to maintain the distinction, despite its complexities, see J. H. Bums, *Lordship, Kingship, and Empire: The Idea of Monarchy, 140&-1525* (Oxford, 1992), esp. 146-62. Nannerl O. Kcohane, *Philosophy and the State in France: The Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Princeton, 1980), talks of the three dominant modes of political argument of‘constitutionalism’, ‘absolutism’, and ‘individualism*, with a secular trend towards the second; see esp. 3-22, and for absolutism, 54-82,124-9, 241-61.1 do not wish to endorse any view about how many such ‘traditions’ there were in early modern Europe.

These contrasting attitudes were actually brought to bear on theoretical debates and practical politics according to a very intricate and subtle chemistry. Tracing the way they were utilized, modified, and, indeed, blended by individual authors or in individual contexts is therefore a complex task, and one that will not be attempted here. Proponents of divine-right monarchy and monarchomachs obviously came into open conflict, but on the whole it is best not to think in terms of mutual exclusiveness. For example, in early sixteenth-century France and early seventeenth-century England a degree of mutual accommodation took place which both reflected and helped to promote the institutional pluralism and intellectual consensus evident in political life as a whole.[16] What can be suggested is that, irrespective of any particular location in text or context, the two sets of arguments had rather different implications for the theme we are considering—the relationship between concepts of magistracy and concepts of witchcraft.

It is difficult to see how the crime could have had the same resonance in the two cases. Contrasting views of the nature of authority in a commonwealth must, of necessity, yield contrasting views concerning the character of the public good it is designed to secure; and these, in turn, must influence attitudes towards threats to that good, including acts of deviance. According to a well-established social theory, the meaning of crimes results not from anything objectively deviant in criminal behaviour but from a kind of transaction between those who make and those who break rules.[17] As an aspect of this, the connotations of a crime can be altered very significantly by differences in the way the authority to establish and enforce rules is conceived. In early modern Europe this was pre-eminently the case, for example, with disobedience. As long as political authority was thought to be theocratic, active resistance had all the awful significance, endlessly repeated and elaborated, of an offence against God. When rulers became trustees of the communal will, public resistance to those who were miscreant ceased to be criminal at all; in other cases, it became a problem of law and order. (The same is, of course, true of the nature of miscreant authority itself. In the first context, it was an offence against God, in the second, punishable in law.)

It must be supposed that witchcraft was, in principle, subject to the same sort of variation—indeed, given its conceptual proximity to disobedience, to very much the same shift of meaning. A crime which, in one context, assumed the terrible proportions of a threat to cosmological order, became, in the other, little more than a particularly nasty felony. Service to the devil and the disorder to which it led could

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“ This is a prominent theme in Church, *Constitutional Thought* and, especially, Eccleshall, *Order and Reason,* and it is presupposed by much of the so-called revisionism in interpretations of early Stum politics. But to offset intellectual consensus there is evidence of a greater polarization of attitudes in France in the 1580s and 1590s and in England in the 1640s and 1650s.

[17] The classic exposition is Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York, 1963), 1-14, but see above, Ch. 36.

only have seemed to be heinous criminal offences to those who assumed that God was the direct author of political forms. As a quintessential sin it was consistent with the expectations of an Augustinianism in political thought that left men and women bereft of the capacity to arrive at institutional arrangements of their own devising and therefore dependent on grace for political salvation. It was also an appeal to a source of authority which parodied the type which God had actually created in his own image, and it reverberated with all manner of damaging implications for the sense of order and hierarchy on which divine politics ultimately rested. In the context of man-made politics, however, the crime became a different and much less portentous one. In a commonwealth erected to ensure the citizens' security and well-being, crimes were trivial or serious according to the threat they posed to these mundane goals. In this context, witchcraft lost the symbolic overtones of rebelliousness and anti-monarchism and became primarily a menace to life and property—the sort of thing John Locke would still have punished.[18] Though hateful and much condemned, it differed in degree only from other kinds of antisocial behaviour.

This point was made, though somewhat differently, by the English clergyman Gregory Hascard, preaching before the Lincoln assizes in 1668. He explained that, because of the theocratic nature of royal government, the 'commands and precepts of kings have a deeper power than only upon the Externals of Man', reaching into the conscience as well and making the discharge of criminal guilt a matter of faith and repentance, and not merely of corporeal punishment. As a further consequence, 'disobedience and rebellion against the smallest Law, is grim'd with the name of Witchcraft, and Apostasy from God, or his Deputy which sounds the same.' Where the authority of magistrates was divine, witchcraft provided the model for infractions against all laws. Hascard recommended that, before handing down their verdicts, English judges should read out their commissions in order to show that 'every Magistrate ('tis no invading of Royalty to say) is by the Grace of God, his Power is given him from above.'[19]

By contrast, the *parlementaires* of early modern Rouen, although agents of royal justice, viewed witchcraft without any special horror as just one more threat to their traditional social values and standards, alongside possibly more damaging crimes like homicide, brigandage, and infanticide.[20] Whether this was accompanied by a commitment to the constitutionalism that coloured the politics of the French *parlements* in this period is not clear. But in the case of the *parlement* of Paris the possibility of such an association of interests does seem strong. Alfred Soman has shown how reluctant the magistrates of this sovereign court were to confirm death sentences for witchcraft when the defendants came before them on appeal from the lower courts, and how, in effect, the *parlement* acted to decriminalize witchcraft in a large part of northern and eastern France from the late sixteenth century onwards. The main reason was a distaste for the public disorder associated with witchcraft investigations at the local level (which could lead to summary executions) and, in particular, a contempt for the judicial abuses involved in the water-ordeal, the search for the witches' 'mark', and other forms of violence against the accused. Soman links this, in turn, to conceptions of the abstract quality and social dignity of public justice, acted in the king's name by the upper-magistrate class; he speaks of a 'lofty self-image of the established "high robe" families and their pride in traditions of jurisprudence fundamentally inimical to the popular fanaticism of the witch craze'.[21] Yet over the same period there were developments in the constitutional ideologies of these same magistrates that led them, again for reasons of both self-interest and public-spiritedness in the name of the Crown, to defend a corporate conception of the French monarchy at odds with the aspirations of pure absolutism. Speaking of the *lit de justice.* for example, one historian talks of a lack of harmony between the 'juristic' and the 'absolutist' (and 'dynastic') ideals that it articulated, and another of the occasioning of outright confrontation.[22]

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[18] Bostridge, 'Debates about Witchcraft', 280-96.

[19] Gregory Hascard, *Gladius Justitiae: A sermon preached at the assizes held at Lincoln March 9 1667* (London, 1668), 3-4.

[20] Jonathan Dewaid, 'The "Perfect Magistrate": Parlementaires and Crime in Sixteenth-Century Rouen', *Archivfiir Reformationsgeschichte,* 67 (1976), 284-300, esp. 295.

If the crime itself could be altered in its focus, so too could the achievement of the magistrate in punishing it. The authority brought to bear on witchcraft by those who were divine deputies was not only Pauline—commanding, as Thomas Cooper put it, 'al [s/r] conscionable obedience ... under God'.[23] It was something like Mosaic in character; it was armed with higher powers and its aim was to defeat demonism in a direct confrontation of forces. In so doing, it achieved the only sort of legitimation which was decisive; hence the highly charged antipathy between the godly magistrate and the demonic witch. In the context of constitutionalism—that is, in regimes thought to rest on some kind of consent—this must surely have evaporated. For here the magistrate was not *minister Dei* but *ministerpopuli* and he acted by human not by divine mandate. In the *Vindiciae* the king was depicted as an agent of the people, his status comparable to that of a salaried officer; lesser magistrates too were servants 'not of the King but of the Kingdom'. For George Buchanan, the king was to act 'like a guardian of the public accounts'; for the Jesuit Juan de Mariana he was, again, like an elected official with a salary.[24] This was certainly to take the mystery out of magistracy. Any idea that magistrates were weaponed with a kind of supernatural superiority over evil and could prove the point by prosecuting witches became largely irrelevant to their position. Their actions and, hence, the validity of their authority, were judged by other criteria. They might still turn against witches, but for the utilitarian reasons that applied in all cases of serious crime. It was thus that Thomas Ady, for whom the purpose of government was 'the defence of peoples Lives and Estates and the only real form of *maleficium* was poisoning, dismissed the idea that magistrates enjoyed any immunity from witches. For him, the influence of Catholic demonology in England was a piece of ‘policy’ aimed at eradicating anti-Catholics as ‘witches’. It was an attempt to persuade civil rulers that they had an absolute power to kill for Religion’ (which the Papacy would rather have retained for itself) and so turn them against the very people whose welfare they were there to defend.[25]

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[21] *Som2n.Sorcellerieetjusticecriminelle.ll.39.2ndsec^ocss2ysi.m.xn.2ndxv.*

[22] Sarah Hanley *The *Lit de Justice * ofthe Kings ofFrance: Constitutional Ideology in Legend, Ritual, and Discourse* (Princeton, 1983), *passim.* esp. 342-3; Mack P. Holt, 'The King in Parlemcnt: The Problem of the *Lit de Justice* in Sixteenth-Century France', *Hist. J.* 31 (1988) 507-23, 515. Cf. R. J. Bonney, *Political Change in France under Richelieu and Mazann (1624-1661)* (Oxford, 1978), 73-8, 238-52.

[23] Cooper, *Mystery of witch-craft*, 280-1.

[24] Skinner, *Foundations*, ii. 338, 342, 347.

These are, admittedly, very general suppositions but they are confirmed in the case of English thought by the frequency with which defenders of divine-right monarchy—mostly clergymen—appealed to 1 Samuel 15: 23 in order to condemn resistance to the Stuart kings. An early example is Isaac Bargrave, dean of Canterbury and royal chaplain, who in March 1627 preached a sermon to Charles I (on the anniversary of his inauguration) taking the biblical verse as his text. Richard Cust, historian of Charles’s ‘forced loan’, calls Bargrave a ‘hard-liner’ of classic divine right theory who denied that subjects had any significant role in politics other than to obey. His aim in the sermon was to turn refusal to pay the loan into outright rebellion and then make rebellion the worst imaginable sin. The biblical metaphor enabled him to make a general comparison between levels of seriousness, and it also seems to have reminded him of the law of contraries. Disobedience, he explained, had a parallel sin (witchcraft) and a contrary virtue (obedience). But there were also intrinsic links; rebellion and witchcraft both came from the devil, and they were both sins against the first Table. ‘The Witch’, preached Bargrave,

> makes the devill his God: little better doth he that makes his owne will his God. Idolatry? why, tis the highest of sinnes, it being against God, not onely as he is a Law-giver, so the breach of the second table is against God: but a sinne directly against God as he is God: And so doth the Rebell oppose him.[26]

Significantly, Bargrave was opposed by the Canterbury ‘puritan’ Thomas Scott, a radical critic of royal policy who (in an unfinished manuscript treatise) emphasized instead the mixed, limited, and contractual character of the English monarchy, and the duty of subjects to disobey if their consciences drove them to it.[27]

When they did disobey, in Scotland, Ireland, and England in and after 1639, witchcraft became even more important to royalists as a point of comparison. George Walker, looking back in 1650 on his battle against William Laud and the episcopalians, complained that the English clergy had always made the pulpits ‘ring with “to obey is better than sacrifice, for Rebellion is as the sinne of Witchcraft, etc.” ’[28] But in the 1640s the doctrine took on an understandable urgency. In May 1644, for example, the archdeacon of Oxford and another royal chaplain, Barten Holyday, preached to MPs at Oxford on the same biblical text, drawing a series of close comparisons between treason to the king and service to the devil. Strikingly, Holyday argued for a conceptual connection between those sceptics in demonology who doubted the reality and seriousness of witchcraft and the constitutionalists of the 1640s (Henry Parker is strongly hinted at but not mentioned) who gave every man 'a Natural supremacy' in politics, made government begin and end 'in the People', and turned rebellion into only a 'Topicall sinne'.[29] Only a month later, even more direct and detailed use was made of parallels between rebellion and witchcraft, with many ideas drawn from *ths Alalleus maleficarum^* in another royalist sermon to Oxford MPs by Nathaniel Bernard, who, like Holyday, likened those who said there were no witches to those who said 'the King may be resisted ... And yet... to be no Rebells: nor the Acts, Acts of Rebellion'.[30] Subsequently, the imprisoned royalist theorist Michael Hudson drew a contrast between divine-right monarchy and demonic-right 'polarchy', which he defined as a form of government, invented by the devil, 'by the Administration and exercise of the Supream Power and Authority of a multitude over the rest of the same society'. Just as the first was biblically sanctioned, so the second was biblically cursed, in part by the comparison between rebellion, 'the constant foundation, and prop of every Ancient and Eminent Polarchy', and witchcraft.[31] At some point during the Civil War years, the former Crown servant Sir Robert Heath also meditated at length on 1 Samuel 15, seeing in it a prophecy of his own times and a defence of theocratic kingship. Witchcraft was an actual desertion of God, rebellion a renunciation of his statement 'by me kings reign'. Again, Heath compared the view that there was no such thing as witchcraft with the view that there was no such thing as rebellion—not (that is) when 'ye people ... may cast of ther yoak of obedience, uppon a supposition that ther is a failer of dutie first on the kings pt... that sets all ye rules of government at large, an[d] sets the power back againe into ye hands of ye people'.[32]

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[25] Ady, *Candle in the dark,* 147, 138.

[26] Isaac Bargrave, *A sermon preached before King Charles, March 27. 1627. Being the anniversary of his majestie's inauguration* (London, 1627), 7, and *passim.*

[27] [illegible] *The Forced Loan and English Politics 1626-1628* (Oxford, [illegible]) [illegible] 62-7, [illegible], 175-82.

[28] [illegible] Walker, [illegible] *the idea* [illegible] of a Norman monarch [illegible] (London, 1650), 53. I was alerted [illegible] 29 [illegible] 3 [illegible] of [illegible] Elmer. He is completing his study [illegible]

Not surprisingly, the restoration of the monarchy brought many fresh reflections of this kind into the sermons and tracts of the 1660s, while the Exclusion Crisis and

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[n] **Barten Holyday, *Against disloyalty, fower sermons preach *d in the times of the late troubles* (Oxford, 1661), 61-94, esp. 62-6.**

[30] **Nathfaniel] Bernard, *Esoptron tes antimachias, ora looking-glassefor rebellion; being a sermon preached upon Sunday the 16. of June 1644 in Saint Maries Oxford, before the members ofthe two Houses of Parliament* (Oxford, 1644), 21-2.**

>■ Michael Hudson's title deserves full quotation: *The divine right of government: l.naturall, and 2. politique. More particularly of monarchic; the onely legitimate and natural spece of politique government. Wherein thephansyedstate-principles supereminencing salutempopuli above the kings honour: And legitimating the erection ofpolarchies, the popular election of kings and magistrates, and the authoritative and compulsive establishment of a national conformity in evangelical and Christian dutyes, rites, and ceremonies, are manifested tobegroundlesseabsurditiesbothinpolicy>anddivinity([Lxsn^n]AMl)^9^2Al\s\xnpQCX2nt^in^n* establishes a demonological framework for his political theory by preceding his discussion of human government with a comparison between the 'miraculous regiment' of God over the creation and the devil s attempts to'ape'it through magic and witchcraft (17-21; wrongly paginated).

n Robert Heath 'A meditation uppon thes wordes Rebellion is as the Sinn of Witchcraft, 1 Samuel 15.23', British Library, Egerton MS 2982, fos. 8M (incorrectly foliated; quotation at 81').

Monmouth's rebellion did the seme for the 1680s." The theme found symbolic expression in a royalist pageant to celebrate the anniversary of the Restoration at Linlithgow in May 1661. An arch with the devil on top depicted the hated policies of the Wars and Interregnum and ridiculed the Covenanters: 'They had also the picture of Rebellion in religious habit, with the book Lex Rex in one hand, and the causes of God's wrath in the other, and this in the midst of rocks, and reels, and kirk stools, logs of wood, and spurs, and covenants, acts of assembly, protestations, with this inscription, "Rebellion is the Mother of Witchcraft".'[34]

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What is indicated here is a significant theoretical differential in the politics of witchcraft beliefs. The relevant context for demonological notions of authority seems to have lain not in the constitutionalist or 'contractual' strains in early modern political thought but in some of the typical arguments used to defend absolutism and divinc-right monarchy. This will not come as a surprise to those who have seen, in the former, intimations of a rational account of politics and, in the latter, outmoded archaisms. But these judgements arc, in any case, no longer tenable. Theocratic rulership undoubtedly had its roots in the past—a past vast enough to embrace traditions stemming from the ancient Near East as well as the medieval West.[35] But its resilience in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries could scarcely be attributed merely to the power of tradition and the force of inertia. For at this late stage in its history it received three massive doses of fresh vitality which gave it a commanding position in witch-prosecuting Europe.

The first came from the Protestant Reformation, with its enthusiasm for the God-given as well as godly prince and its denial of human sufficiency in political as well as theological matters. It has been said that 'the main influence of Lutheran political theory in early modern Europe lay in the direction of encouraging and legitimating

[11] For some typical examples, see William Creed, *Judah's return to their allegiance: and David's relume to his crown and kingdom* (London, 1660), 29-30; Douch, *Englands jubilee: or, her happy return from captivity,* 17; .Matthew Griffith, *The fear ofgod and the king (London,* 1660), 38; Thomas Bayly, *The royal charier granted unto kings by God himself* (London, 1682), 23; Richard Kingston, *Vital rex* (London, 1683), 4; William Gostwyke, *A sermon preached at... Cambridge on the 26th of July 1685* (Cambridge, 1685), 5-7.

[34] C. K. Sharpe (cd.), *The Secret and True History ofthe Church of Scotland ...by the Rev. Mr. James Kirkton* (Edinburgh, 1817), 126-7; the incident is noted by Brian P. Levack, 'The Great Scottish Witch Hunt of 1661-1662',*J. British Stud.* 20(1980-1), 107-8, who suggests that it is possible that such 'royalist professions of hatred for revolution and rebellion created a public mood, at least in some communities, that was especially conducive to witch hunting'. For associations between rebellion and sorcery in the coronation pageants of Charles II, sec John Ogilby, 77ir *entertainment of his most excellent majestie Charles II, in his passage through the city of London to his coronation* (London, 1662), 13-15,47.

[35] Studies of theocratic monarchy before the early modem period are legion, but a useful beginning may be made with Fritz Kern, *Kingship and Law in the Middle Ages,* trans, with intro. S. B. Chrimes (Oxford, 1939), 5-68; Jean de Pange, *Le Roi ires chretien* (Paris, 1949); *The Sacral Kingship/La Regalitd Sacra* (Leiden, 1959); Werner Stark, *The Sociology of Religion: A Study of Christendom,* iii. *The Universal Church* (London, 1967), 28—86; E. H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, 1957); Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (London, 1948), Janet L. Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early Modem Europe* (London, 1986); Klaniczay, *Uses of Supernatural Power,* 79-94. There is a survey of the literature in G. Feeley-Hamick, 'Issues in Divine Kingship', *Annual Rev. Anthropology,*(1985), 273-313.

the emergence of unified and absolute monarchies.'[36] Quite apart from enjoying the support of Luther and Mclanchthon, divine-right theories of government were soon defended by a succession of German jurists of Lutheran persuasion, beginning with men like Johannes Fcrrarius, Georg Lautcrbcck, and Jacobus Omphalus.[37] In England William Tyndale gave a classic account of these ideas in his treatise of 1528, *The obedience of a Christian man* while in Scandinavia, where there was little or no theoretical discussion of the nature of authority on Lutheran lines, theocratic politics had become the strongest thematic element in the coronation ceremonies for the Danish kings by 1537. The fact that Luther and several other prominent theologians changed their minds about non-resistance after 1530 gave a radical dimension to Lutheran political theory but it never outweighed the general commitment to political authority as a providential dispensation.[38]

The very considerable attention that has been devoted to the emergence of 'Calvinist' resistance theory may well have masked Calvinism's own contribution to resurgent providcntialism and the politics of divine right, as well as ignoring the extent to which such a theory was not even distinctively Protestant.[39] To offset Calvin's celebrated concession regarding the 'ephoral' privileges of lesser magistrates there is in his *Institutes* a much more insistent derivation *a Deo* of all rulership, good and evil alike; 'all equally have been endowed with that holy majesty with which [God] has invested lawful power.'[40] It would be quite wrong to suppose that the only adulation for the monarchy of Elizabeth and the early Stuarts came from 'high' churchmen and Arminians, and quite absurd to think that James I's divine-rightism, as well as that of his bishops, was not totally compatible with staunch Calvinism. Calvinism was not in essence constitutionalist, let alone revolutionary, since it was not in essence anything—politically speaking. The sort of politics that issued from it depended very much on circumstances; and the case of the Jacobean clergy (as well as that of the French Calvinist absolutists Moysc Amyraut and Elie Merclat) shows

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[u] Skinner, *Foundations,* ii. 113; cf. Mesnard, *L'Essor de la philosophic politique,* 229-35; W. D. J. Cargill Thompson, *The Political Thought of Martin Luther* (Brighton, 1984), 7-9,62—78.

[17] Johannes Ferrarius [Montanus], *De republica bene instituenda* (Basel, 1556). The work was trans, into German by the Marburg attorney Abraham Saur (who was also a writer on witchcraft) and published in 1601; I have used the English trans, by the Middle Temple lawyer William Bauandc, *A woorke ... touchynge the good orderynge of a common weale* (London, 1559), fos. 19—23; Georg Lautcrbeck, *Regentenbuch* (Leipzig, 1557), fos. xvni'-xxxim'; Jacobus Omphalus, *De civili politia* (Cologne, 1563), 10,248-9, 342.

[M] For the Danish coronation ceremony, see Lauterbeck, Regcntenbuch, fos. xxf-xxx'. On Luther's and Lutheran views concerning resistance, see Skinner, *Foundations,* ii. 74,194-206, and Cargill Thompson, *Political Thought of Martin Luther,* 91-111.

” The key account of Catholic 'conciliar' influences on constitutionalism is Francis Oakley, *The Political Thought of Pierre d'Ailly: The Voluntarist Tradition* (London, 1964), csp. 211-33.

[40] Calvin *Institutes,* ii. 1510-13, quotation at 1512. Commentaries in Allen, *History of Political Thoutht,* 53-5; Mesnard, *L'Essor de la philosophic politique,* 287-9; Harro Hopfl, *The Christian Polity of John Calvin* (Cambridge, 1982), 47-9, who also stresses Qlvin's animus aga.nst monarchs, see 160-71. Lucien Romier, *Le Royaume de Catherine de AUdicis: La France a la vale il des guerres de religion* <2 vols.; Paris 1922) ii 222, wrote of Calvin that in his *Institutes,* 'the theme of the divinenght of Kings. ..is as solidly b«d“u^nthe very words ofHoly Scripture” as it was tobe in theworksofBoouct.' This should be set alongside Skinner's remarks on Luther and Bossuet, see above n. 36.

that it was just as capable of yielding monarchist as populist doctrines. This is what occurred in the Erastian conditions which prevailed in England—until, that is, the coming of Arminianism, when conditions and (accordingly) attitudes began to change.[41]

The second important boost to the concept of monarchical authority as a gift of grace came from arguments about the relationship between Church and State conducted in 'Gallican' terms. Insisting that kings had full control over ecclesiastical as well as temporal matters within their domains, and that they could expect the undivided loyalty of their subjects, whether lay or clergy, also involved tracing their powers and their responsiblities to divine institution—in this case, free of any papal intervention. The strategy was hardly new but the need to adopt it grew increasingly more pressing as secular rulers clashed with Rome and with their Catholic subjects. In France Gallican defences of royal absolutism were already prominent under Francis I, for example in the treatise *Regalium Franciae libriduo* (1538) by the Carcassone magistrate Charles de Grassaille. After 1576 and the formation of the Catholic League they naturally rose to a crescendo among royalist jurists and *politiques,* and were eventually given definitive treatment in the 1590s by Louis Servin and Pierre Pithou.[42]

In Protestant contexts, too, the equivalent of Gallican arguments were prominent among theorists of absolutism and the divine right of kings. There is scarcely a Protestant apologist for monarchy between Tyndale and the Long Parliament who does not refer to the pretensions of Popes as inimical to true rulership; and, needless to say, there is no Catholic absolutism in England after Stephen Gardiner. J. P. Sommerville has written: 'In the first two decades of Stuart rule, absolutist ideas were enunciated primarily against Catholics and only secondarily in the context of domestic political disputes.'[43] Again, one might point to bishops like Thomas Morton or eminent academics like John Prideaux, but the rector of Black Notley in Essex, Richard Crakanthorpe, illustrates the point just as well. In 1608 he preached a Paul's

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[41] The monarchism of the Jacobean clergy and episcopate is evident from Johann P. Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England, 1603-1610* (London, 1986), 9-50, esp. 44; he argues that there 'is little to distinguish the ideas of Buckeridge, Bolton or Morton from those of Continental—say, French—absolutists'. For the argument that Arminianism made enemies out of Calvinists who should otherwise have been natural supporters of the Caroline regime, see Nicholas Tyacke, 'Puritanism, Arminianism and Counter-Revolution', in C. Russell (ed.), *The Origins of the English Civil War* (London, 1973), 119-43, and id., *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism* (Oxford, 1987). The contextual nature of the politics of Calvinism is evident from the essays in Menna Prestwich (ed.), *International Calvanism 1541-1715* (Oxford, 1985) but, for a different view, see Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study of the Origins of Radical Politics* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965).

[42] Charles de Grassaille, *Regalium Franciae* (Lyons, 1538), esp. 40-65; Louis Servin, *Findiciae secundum libertatem ecclesiae gallicanae et defensio regii status Gallo-Francorum* (Tours, 1590), which Church, *Constitutional Thought,* 266, calls 'one of the most extreme Gallican treatises of the period'; [Pierre Pithou], *Les Libertez de l'eglise gallicane* (Paris, 1594). The tradition was continued vigorously into the 17th c. in Francois Grimaudet, *De la puissance royalle et sacerdotale* (Paris, 1605), and Jean Savaron, *Traictl de la souveraineté du roy, et de son royaume* (Paris, 1615). The only major Gallican constitutionalist in France was Guy Coquille; see Church, *Constitutional Thought,* 272-302.

[43] Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology,* 46.

Cross sermon which violently denounced allegiance to Popes as antichristian and argued that James, like Solomon, ruled his people ‘in God’s steed, as one immediately representing Gods owne person among them, and beeing his immediate Vicegerent, or Lieutenant over all Israel’.[44] Likewise, in Germany the jurist Henningus Arnisacus of Halberstadt opened his monumental *De iure majestatis libri Ires* (1610) by claiming that papal (and Imperial) overlordship vitiated the concept of sovereignty implicit in St Paul (in the Tower of London the imprisoned MP Sir John Eliot found the work congenial enough to make an abridged translation of it).[45] Testimony to German interest in Gallican writings on a European scale are the volumes including translations from this material issued by the Calvinist lawyer and historian Melchior Goldast.[46] Everywhere anti-papalism helped men to focus their arguments in favour of a divine mandate for civil power.

Thirdly, we should not neglect the extent to which theocratic and absolutist arguments were advanced in direct response to a pressing practical need for order. Whether or not affairs were actually in chaos is not the issue here. That they were *perceived* to be acted as a spur to the voicing of ever more extreme claims concerning the unfettered authority of sacred kingship. The theme of the pervasive sense of disorder felt by Europeans in the age of the witch trials has been a recurrent one in this study. Here too it impinges directly on our understanding of why particular intellectual stances were so appealing. Like all bearers of charismatic authority, divine kings could bring extraordinary and dramatic solutions to problems felt to be altogether beyond the reach of normal remedies. Their powers were at the very least heroic, perhaps even miraculous—qualities that the Christian tradition had no difficulty transferring to its secular saviours. In these circumstances, the belief that their competences were qualitatively different from those of ordinary mortals was not a romantic extravagance; it was actually required for the practical success of government. And to solve supernaturally difficulties that men’s natural skills left untouched was by itself sufficient legitimation of that government.

It should be said, once again, that these are concepts foreign to any political theory which sees proper obligating authority as in some sense the expression of the wills of citizens. Be that as it may, they were very popular in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Europe, and nowhere more than in the most disordered society—France. It was even J. W. Allen's view' that, while in form and content French belief in the divine right of kings was religious, its 'actual basis' was utilitarian.[47] This is a false distinction because it denies to the religious a sense of what is 'actual' and implies a kind of epiphenomcnal status for their beliefs. But it is also an unnecessary distinction, since, as we have seen, the ordering power of authentic charisma is intrinsic to it and not an incidental, contingent advantage. Besides, perceptions of the nature of disorder and the need for security were informed by religious beliefs rather than acting as a substitute for them—a point that applies as much to the so-called *politique* authors as to others. What is true about France is that, as the social and moral order became more and more precarious, remedial action came to be seen as a matter for divine rather than human agency, irrespective of denominational considerations. In effect, it acquired the character of a miracle. The tendency is already evident in the 1570s in the works of Loys Le Roy, Pierre Grégoire, and Francois Grimaudct.[48] Ten years later it had entered its militant phase in the outspoken royalism of Pierre de Belloy, Francois Le Jay, Adam Blackw'ood, and others.[49] And by the opening of the new century the tracts of royal officials like David Du Rivault, Pierre Poisson, and Pierre Constant, and jurists like William Barclay and Pierre de L'Hommcau had made it an orthodoxy.[50] Of the many panegyrics addressed to Louis XIII, Jacques Mahaut's was typical in portraying him as a charismatic provider of natural and social goods.[51] France was thus the outstanding example of a nation whose political theorists turned, in crisis, to mystical solutions. But it has been argued that in England too social instability and the fear of religious unrest promoted the belief in sacred and absolute monarchy at the expense of the idea that authority stemmed from communal reason.[52] Wherever divinely inspired order was perceived to be seriously undermined, the countermanding force of divinely inspired rulers proved more attractive.

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[44] **Richard Crakanthorpe, *A sermon at the solemnizing of the happie inauguration of our most gracious and religious soveraigne King James. Wherein is manifestly proved, that the soveraignty of kings is immediately from God, and second to no authority on earth whatsoever* (London, 1609), sig. D4**

[41] **Henningus Arnisacus, *De iure majestatis* (Frankfurt/Main, 1610), 15-21. John Eliot s English summiry was cd. and pub. by A. B. Grosart as *De Jure maiettatit or. Political Treatite of Government (1628-30),* (London, 1882); cf. J. N. Bal), ‘Sir John Eliot and Parliament, 1624-1629 , in Kevin Sharpe (ed.), *Faction and Parliament: Ettayt on Early Stuart Hirtory* (Oxford, 1978), 174-5. Arnisacus also tackled princely authority in *De autoritate principum inpopulum tempertnvtolabtteu quod nulla ex cauta tubdttitfat til contra legitimumprincipemarmamovere.commentatio politico (Ennkfurt/Miin,* 1612).**

*** Melchior Goldast trans, and ed., *Monorchia S. Romani Imperu me iractatut dejuntdictione imperial! teu regia, et pontificia teu tacerdotali* (2 vols.; Hanau and Frankfurt/Mam, 1611-14), esp. vol. n. for 16th-c. ^Gallicanism’. For Goldast’s beliefs about witches and their proper pumshment see id., *Rechtlichee Bcdenclten, von Conf tcationder Zauberer undllexcn-Guther(Btcmcn,\66\),esp.* 1-129 (pub. posthumously and written *c.* 1629).**

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Taken together, these three developments of the sixteenth century show that, despite the keen attention paid to constitutionalism and resistance theory by some modern historians, it was the politics of the supernatural that proved more alluring to many contemporary theorists. Throughout Catholic Europe, the intellectual celebration of the prince enjoyed a fresh vogue, especially after the council of Trent. In

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[47] Allen, *Political Thought,* 393, sec also 274.

[48] Le Roy, *De l'excellence du gouvemement royal;* Pierre Grégoire, *De refiublica* (Lyons, 1609), first pub. 1578; Francois Grimaudet, *Les Opuscules politique:* (Paris, 1580).

[49] Belloy, *De l'authorite du roy, esp.* fos. 4'-7,16'-19'; François Lc Jay, *De la dignite des roys et princes souverams* (Tours, 1589), esp. fos. 1-11', 33-65', 189' -; Adam Blackwood, *Adversus Georgii Buchanani dialogurn, de ture regm apud Scolos, pro regibus apologia* (Poitiers, 1581).

[50] Da[illegible] Rivault, *Les* [illegible] *discount du prince* (Lyons, 1596), cited Church, *Constitu-*[illegible] 308-12; Pierre Poisson, Sieur de [illegible] Bodinicrc, *Traictede la majeste royalle en France* (Paris, 1597); Pierre Constant, *De l'excellence el dignities roys* (Paris, 1598); William Barclay, *De regno et regali potestate* (Paris, 1600); Pierre de L'Hommcau, *Les maximes generalles du droid francois* (Rouen, 1614); I have consulted the cdn. of Paris, 1665.

[51] Jacques Mahaut, Sieur de la Maunyaic, *Panegyrique au roy* (Paris, 1622), *passim.*

[52] Eccleshall, *Order and Reason,Ki;* Sommervillc, *Politics and Ideology,* 9-12.

Germany the theocratic absolutism of the Lutherans continued into the seventeenth century in the writings of Theodor Rcinking and Dirk Graswinckel, to reach its apogee in *Pohticorum pars architectonica de civitate* by the Silesian jurist Johann Friedrich Horn.[53] In England conceptions of limited monarchy and mixed government may be inferred from the workings of institutions and from practical power-sharing but the current of theoretical opinion ran in the other direction. The Elizabethan cult of royalism was well established by Charles Mcrbury, Thomas Flo)d, and the naturalized Artesian, Hadrianus Saravia, as well as by many writers dealing with the subject of rebellion. Under the early Stuarts supematuralism became legendary; at the same time the theory of mixed government 'practically sank into obli\ion '.[54] In France the lively constitutionalism inherited from the fifteenth century gradually became subdued; in seventeenth-century French history-writing, for example, the king became 'the sacred centre of a religious world'.[55] The absolutist theory on divine right lines which naturally' preoccupied seventeenth-century Bourbon apologists like Jerome Bignon, Jean Savaron, and, later, Cardin Le Bret and the Sieur de Balzac, was eventually given definitive exposition by Bossuet in 1679.[56] Only in Spain was theocratic absolutism held intellectually in check. Here, none of

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” Theodor [i.c. Dietrich] Rcinking, *Tractatus de regimine seculari et ecclesiastico,* 2nd cdn. (Marburg, 1632), 1-13; cf. id., *Bibltsche Policey, Das ist: Gewisse, auss Heiliger Gottlicher Schrijft zusammen gebrachte, auffdie drey Hauptstdnde: Alt Geist lichen, Helt lichen, und Hdusslichen, gerichteteAxiomata, oder Schlussreden* (Frankfurt/Main, 1653), pt. 2, 1-2 and ff.; Dirk Graswinckel, *De jure majestatis dissertatio* (The Hague, 1642), 1-9,10-13,14-17,54-84; Johann Friedrich *Hom, Politicorum pars architectonica de civitate* (Utrecht, 1664), 120-4,127-87; commentary in Gierke, *Development of Political Theory,* 76-77. On this strand of argument in German political theory and literature, see Henri Plard, 'La Saintctc du pouvoir royal dans le *Leo Annenius* d'Andreas Gryphius (1616-1664)', in Luc de Hcusch *etal.* (eds.), *Le Pouvoir et le sacre (Brussels,* 1962), 159-78.

[54] Ecclcshall, *Order and Reason,* 36; cf. Sommcrville, *Politics and Ideology,* 47, who says that ideas of mixed and limited monarchy and the legitimacy of resistance were 'the exception not the rule' by the early years of James I's reign. For the Elizabethan royalists, sec Merbury, *Brief* discourse of royall monarchic;* Thomas Floyd, *The picture of a perfit common wealth, describing as well the offices ofprinces and inferiour magistrates over their subjects, as also the duties ofsubjects towards their govemours* (London, 1600); Hadrianus Saravia, *De imperandi authoritate, et Christiana obedientia, libri qua tor* (London, 1593). On Saravia, see J. P. Sommcrville, 'Richard Hooker, Hadrian Saravia, and the Advent of the Divine Right of Kings', *Hist, Political Thought,* 4 (1983), 236—45.

” Tyvaert, see next note, 522, see also 545.

[w] Jerome Bignon, *De la grandeur de nos roys, et de leur souveraine puissance* (Paris, 1615), *passim;* Savaron, *Traictelle la souverainete du roy;* Cardin Le Bret, *De la souverainete du roy* (Paris, 1632), esp. 1-8, 9-15,64-75,697-8; Jean Louis Guez, Sieur de Balzac, *Le Prince* (Paris, 1631); Jacques-Bcnigne Bossuet, *Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture,* trans, and cd. Patrick Riley (Cambridge, 1990), esp. 57-101 (bks. 3-4). On images of royally in France throughout this period, sec Allen, *History of Political Thought,* 367-93; Francois Dumont, 'La Royautc frangaisc vue par les auteurs littcraircs au xvf siede', in *Etudes historiques a la memoire de Noel Didier* (Paris, 1960), 61-93; Margaret M. McGowan, 'Les Images du pouvoir royal au temps de Henri III', in *Theorie et pratique politiques a la Renaissance,* XVII' Colloque International de Tours (Paris, 1977), 301-20; Michel Tyvaert, 'L'lmage du roi: Leg.um.te et moral,Cc royales dans les histoires de France au xvn* siede', *Revue d'Histoire Modem* et Contemporaine,21* (1974), 521-47; Sabatier, 'Imaginaire, État et sociefe', 59-72; Jean Boutier, Alain Dcwerpe, anDarnel Nordman, *Un tour dr Fran" royal: Lr Ktyagr dr Charlrt IX (1564-1566)* (Pans, 1984) 283-345; Chnst.aneTe.sseyre, 'Le Prince Chretien aux xV et xvr siecies, a travers les representations de Charlemagne et de Saint-Louis', *Annalrt dr Brrtagnr rt dr, Payt dr POurtt,* 87 (1980), 409-14; Franyo.se Bardon £ Por/ntH *mythologiqur d la courdr Francr. tout Henri IV rt LouitXIII. Mythology rtpohl.qur* (Pans, 1974), *pattun,*

the three developments just surveyed was experienced, and a scholastic constitutionalism was strongly in evidence in the writings of the dominant theorists—Thomists like Vitoria, Suárez, and Molina. In Spanish political theology, the king certainly had a special relationship with God, but through his 'divinely demanded duties' rather than his 'divinely bestowed rights'.[57] Without the extravagant numinism evident elsewhere in Europe, the Spanish monarchy also lacked other things that it will be important to consider in later chapters—a coronation ceremony, a power to heal, and an unrestrained tradition of court festivals.[58] This perhaps is the background to the absence of a strongly political demonology in Spain.

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In medieval thought, 'descending' theories of politics had coexisted with those that located power in communities and therefore derived it 'from below'.[59] Eventually the former were overtaken by the latter, to become outmoded in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. But this should not be allowed to obscure retrospectively their intellectual hegemony for much of the intervening period. According to Francis Oakley (following Figgis); 'From 1450 onwards ... it seemed to most practical statesmen and to all monarchs that absolute monarchy was the most civilized form of government.'[60] Once this is recognized, we can see a familiar trajectory—in fact, the political equivalent of that followed by learned witchcraft beliefs and their own conceptual rivals. Early modern demonology was an intellectual accompaniment of a particular political tradition; it emerged on a significant scale at the same moment in European history, flourished alongside it, and declined as the world of politics was decisively rethought.

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esp. 260-75; Anne-Marie Lecoq, 'Le Symbolique de l'état: Les Images de la monarchie des premiers Valois à Louis XIV", in Pierre Nora *et al.* (eds.), *Les Lieux de mémoire,* ii. *La Nation,* pt. 2 (Paris, 1986), 145-92.

[57] Stark, *Sociology of Religion,* iii. 126-51 (quotation at 149); cf. Bernice Hamilton, *Political Thought in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Oxford, 1963), 30-43, who says that Vitoria, De Soto, Suárez, and Molina were all 'constitutional thinkers in the sense of advocating monarchy under various restraints' (38); Skinner, *Foundations, ii.* 135—73.

[58] J. H. Elliott, *Spain and its World, 1500-1700: Selected Essays* (London, 1989), 167.

[59] The terminology is, of course, derived from Walter Ullmann, *Principles of Government and Politics in the Middle Ages* (London, 1961), esp. 19-26. For detailed and trenchant criticism, see Francis Oakley, 'Celestial Hierarchies Revisited: Walter Ullmann's Vision of Medieval Politics', *Past and Present,* 60 (1973), 3-48.

[60] Oakley, *Pierre d'Ailly,* 231.

41

Marvellous Monarchy

And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

(1 Samuel 10:6)

Twixt Kings and Subjects ther’s this mighty odds,
Subjects are taught by Men; Kings by the Gods.

(Robert Herrick, ‘The Difference betwixt Kings and Subjects’)

AT the height of its popularity, mystical politics was the vehicle for assertions about authority which had an especial kinship with those made by witchcraft authors. These ideological claims served to increase the conceptual distance between subjects and sovereigns until the latter became truly the superior beings that divinc-right theory (properly so called) demanded. One effect of this, according to Michael Walzer, was to make formal regicide the most telling factor in the decline of old regime kingship. Unlike mere king-murder, it touched the very things that made kingly power so much more than a matter of centralized force and executive efficiency. It publicly denied the divine ruler’s personal inviolability, and, along with it, ‘all the mysteries of kingship without which the practical powers of monarchy cannot survive for long’. However, Walzer’s account of‘the importance of mystery to the integrity of monarchic rule’, and of its prevalence in early modern Europe, finds echoes in the history of witchcraft beliefs too. For this kind of political theology helped to fashion a context in which the authority brought to bear on witchcraft could itself assume a supernatural aspect.[1]

At the general level, the most powerful contributor was the straightforward deification of temporal rulers. Modern liberal sensibilities tend to recoil from this sort of secular adulation and there remains a temptation to blame it simply on the desire to flatter.[2] Yet the directly divine derivation of temporal rule and the assumption that it must, in all senses, represent its original were enough to ensure its intellectual respectability. From the sense of‘corresponding to’ stemmed descriptions of kings as images, effigies, types, or portraits of God; and from the sense of‘acting for’ came the parallel imageries of lieutenancy, vice-regency, vicarship, and stewardship. One Frenchman, with utter typicality, spoke of the king as the ‘imitator of God, whose place he occupies here on earth’; another described kings as ‘living and speaking images of God, human Gods on the face of the earth’.[3] In England, Merbury described the true prince as ‘the Image of God on Earth, and as it were *tin minor essempio* of his almightie Power’, while the lawyer Henry Finch talked of him ‘Carrying God’s stamp and mark among men, and being ... a God upon earth, as God is a King in heaven’; he was, he added, ‘a shadow of the excellencies that are in God’.[4]

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[1] Walzer (cd.), *Regicide and Revolution,* 5; Walzer’s ‘Introduction’ (1-89) gives an excellent summary of the themes of what I have called ‘mystical politics’. In addition to the texts cited below, there are many additional references to the ‘merveilleux monarchiquc’ in Etienne Thuau, *Raison d Elat et penste politique d I'époquede Richelieu* (Paris, 1966), 20-32.

[2] See, for example, Allen, *History of Political Thought*, 376, on Claude d’Albon: ‘A writer of 1575, contemplating the sovereignty of Kings, had worked himself up to the pitch of ecstatic nonsense.

The position of contemporary rulers was likened to that of the divine nominees of Old Testament Judaea and Israel, notably Saul, Samuel, and David. This was a continuity expressed in ritual terms by coronal anointing, God’s own method of establishing kings, transmitting charisma to them, and (in the words of 1 Samuel 10: 6) turning them into ‘other men’—that is, transferring them from the category of the profane to that of the sacred.[5] In France especially, the mystical attributes of kingship were considerably enhanced by the miracles surrounding the chrismal oil used during the royal coronation, and by the idea that the fleur-de-lis was a divinely bestowed hieroglyph of royal sanctity.[6] The imagery of Charles II’s coronation in 1660 still allowed for an interpretation of social change ‘as the direct effect of a noumenal transcendence’.[7] On occasions, the claims issuing from the theocratic associations of kingship became very elevated indeed; the French monarchy was ‘encircled’, wrote Marc Bloch, ‘with a kind of marvellous halo’.[8] By the seventeenth century the ceremony of the royal entry, previously an embodiment of constitutionalist sentiments, was being compared to the entry of Christ into heaven.[9] In England, John Rawlinson made comparisons between James I’s accession and the Annunciation (as both being beginnings of redemptive processes), and said that if the king was 'Jacobum Dei, James by the grace of God', then God was 'Deum Jacobi, the gratious God of King James'.[10] When Bishop Montagu of Winchester edited James's writings in 1616 he likened them to 'divers works of God ... set forth in the Bible'.[10] [11] It was invariably remarked that princes were given the name of 'gods' in the Old Testament, but many, like Finch, noticed that the process was reversible. One could deduce the attributes of temporal rulers from a divine pattern, but (as Claude d'Albon also argued) one could begin to grasp the principle of divine unity by considering the sovereign power of kings. In these circumstances, political conformity became something like an act of religious worship.[12] For critics of excessive royal adulation, of course, it became something like political idolatry.[13]

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[3] Poisson, *Traicte de la majeste royalle,* fo. 3', see also fos. 21 '-4'; Anon., *De droict divin qu 'ilfaut obeir aux roys* (Paris, 1622), 19 (dedication signed ‘I.P.R.’). For many other French examples of these commonplaces of political theory, see Thuau, *Raison d'Etat,* 15-19.

[4] Merbury, *Briefe discourse,* 43, see also 52; Finch cited by Weston and Greenberg, *Subjects and Sovereigns,* 8. Evidence for the English monarchy’s continuing other-worldly status is summarized in Starkey, ‘Representation through Intimacy’, 192-6.

[5] Louis Rougier, ‘Le Caractcrc sacre de la royautc cn France’, in *The Sacral Kingship/La Regalitd Sacra,* 609-10; Kern, *Kingship and Law,* 37; Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution,* 17-19.

[6] See, for example, Jerome Bignon, *De l’Excellence des roys, et du royaume de France* (Paris 1610), 502-10; Saconay, *De la providence de Dieu,* 8; Roland, *De la dignite du roy,* 11-15, 23-, [I. P. R.], *De droict divin,* 8-10. The fullest treatment of a *Deo* themes in the context of royal ceremonial is Andre DuChesne *Les Antiquitez et recherches de la grandeur et majeste des roys de France* (Paris 1609) esn 4 q 174-A, 368-476. On the relevant legends, see Bloch, *Royal Touch,* 125-48; R. A. Jackson, *Vive le Roi! [illegible] Hist0 of the French Coronation from Charles Vto Charles*^(London, 1984), 32J; and f’r th^coronathn^ period of high absolutism, Anton Haueter, *Die Kronungen derfranzosischen Kdnige im Zeitalterdes Ahsolutismus und in der Restaura lion* (Zurich, 1975), 286—342.

[7] Gerard Reedy, ‘Mystical Politics: The Imagery of Charles II’s Coronation’ in Paul [illegible] Korshin (ed.), *Studies in Change and Revolutton: Aspects of Intellectual History 16-10-1800* (Menston Yorks 1972) 40. For political messianism in Restoration England, see Webster, *Paracelsus to Newton* [illegible], and [illegible] coronations and charismatic rulership, David J. Sturdy, ‘ “Continuity” versus “Change” [illegible] English Coronations of the Medieval and Early Modern Periods’, in Janos M. Bak (ed.), *Coronations: Medieval and Early Modem Monarchic Ritual* (Oxford, 1990), 242.

[8] Bloch, *Royal Touch,* 197, and see 195-203 for Bloch’s attempt to write about ‘sacred royalty’ as a matter of public sentiment and mental habit, rather than of doctrinaire theory only.

[9] L. Bryant, *The King and the City in the Parisian Royal Entry Ceremony Polish* [illegible], *Ritual and Art in the Renaissance* (Geneva, 1986), 64, see also 132-3,204-5,207-24.

Particularly noticeable is the process whereby, in France, divinity came to be thought of as an attribute of the royal person as well as of the royal office.[14] In his *De reptiblica* of 1578 Pierre Gregoire could still insist on the traditional separation of king from kingship. The tenacity of constitutionalism and fundamental law regarding the succession also checked the transfer of the weight of divine authorization from the Crown in general to its particular holder. Even so, Adam Blackwood was suggesting in 1581 that the royal person was divine and that the monarch was literally a god on earth. And with later royalist authors it became usual to argue that the Salic Law merely regulated the succession of divinely ordained individuals; David Du Rivault even claimed that God had chosen Henri IV by ensuring his birth into the 'right' family. 'In this fashion', it has been said, 'extreme absolutists ... based their fundamental theory of kingship simply upon the personal divine right of the reigning monarch.'[15] At the opening of the seventeenth century the idea had become a juristic orthodoxy among influential systematizers like Charles Loyseau and William Barclay. What occurred in the hundred years between Bodin and Bossuet was, in effect, the fullest possible theoretical re-personalizing of charismatic authority consistent with the principle of transference through blood (which not even the most radical absolutist, and certainly no Bourbon supporter, could sacrifice). This was to put the development which Weber called ‘routinization’ momentarily into reverse. It may, perhaps, be thought suggestive that, at a time when witchcraft authors were calling on magistrates in general to fulfil a charismatic role, the dilution that (as Weber himself admitted) attended its transference from the individual leader to the attributes of his office was being checked, and the legitimacy of charismatic authority in a purer, more concentrated, and more personal form was being re-affirmed.

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[10] Rawlinson, *I'ivat rex.* 36, see also 38.

[11] *The workes of the most high and mighty prince, James.* 'The preface to the Reader*; cited Parry, *Golden Age Restor'd.* 26.

[12] Weston and Greenberg, *Subjects and Sovereigns.* 8; Claude d'Albon, *De la majesté royalle, institution et préeminence, et des faveurs divines particulieres enters icelie* (Lyons, 1575), fo. 31'; see also fos. 5r-6'. Boutier, Dcwerpe, and Nordman argue that the Holy Thursday ritual of washing children's feet gave Charles IX 'un aspect christique': *Un tour de France royal.* 342. For other allusions to Smart kingship as a pattern *for* the divinity, see R. M. Smuts, *Court Culture and the Origins of a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England* (Philadelphia, 1987), 230-8.

[12] The issues were raised in the aftermath of the assassination of Henri IV, by Jean Filesac, *De idololatria politico et legitimoprincipiscultu commentarius.* in id., *Opera varia* (Paris, 1621), see esp. 4,70-5; and, in the aftermath of the execution of Charles I, by John Milton, *Eikonoklastes* (London, 1649). They are discussed (in the context of English criticisms of king worship) by Richard F. Hardin, *Civil Idolatry: Desacralizing and Monarchy in Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton (London.* 1992),esp. 15—40, where Hardin argues that sacred monarchy was 'foreign to English political thought' in the 16th c.

[14] In what follows I am dependent on Church, *ConstitutionalThought.* 247-51,267-8,308-9,315-20. On the 'divinization' of the French king, see also Denis Richct, 'La Monarchic au travail sur elle-meme?', in Keith Baker (ed.), *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture,* i. *The Political Culture of the Old Regime* (Oxford, 1987), 34-5.

[11] Church, *Constitutional Thought.* 309.

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Deification was, however, a general trend. Accompanying it was an increasing stress on three closely interlinked features of absolute monarchical authority, each of which enhanced the supernatural status of rulers in more particular ways. The first concerned the infallibility of the royal will.[16] The two broad styles of political thought represented by constitutionalism and absolutism were characterized as much as anything by the manner in which they dealt with the problem of accountability. In the first, the tendency was to render the actions of the prince answerable to the will of the community artificially expressed in fundamental or customary laws; in the second, he himself was regarded as in some sense the source of law, subject to the overriding sanctions provided by heaven and the dictates of natural reason. As the favoured political discourse became increasingly absolutist and the Bodinian concept of sovereignty became the dominant one, so the equation of royal will and human law became more insistent. At the same time, the possibility of the miscreant exercise of legal sovereignty was defined away. This was not (as Hobbes was later to argue) because the actions of one whose authority constituted justice must *ipso facto* be just. Rather it was due to the ever greater stress on the divinity of the ruler. The link was made in a verse from Proverbs 16:10: ‘A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.’ One who was numinous simply could not make mistakes, let alone act arbitrarily; his wisdom was universal and his actions must of necessity conform to the eternal standards of divine and natural justice. ‘ ’Tis God by whom Kings Reign’, wrote Diego de Saavedra Fajardo in his internationally successful book of political emblems, ‘and upon whom all their Power and Felicity depends; they could never err, if they would make him their only Object.’[17]

This position was all but reached in France in the period between 1585 and 1593 in writers like Jacques Hurault and Francois Le Jay. Hurault spoke of the opinion ‘that the prince which is religious, is so guided by Gods hand, that he cannot do amisse’. By 1596 Du Rivault had come to what W. F. Church called ‘the fantastic conclusion of identifying royal enactments with divine law itself, both in original

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[16] ,Fh.“JCh’Con,lilulional Thou*ht’61’’2’25M- 268-71,310-11,333-5; Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, 35-46.

[17] Saavedra Fajardo, *Royal politician*, i. 127 (from the commentary accompanying emblem xviii, ‘A Deo’). Saavedra was not, however, an absolutist; for this and the publishing history of his *Idea de un principe politico-cnstiano* see Robert Bireley, *The Counter-Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellianim or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1990), 197,193-4.

source and immediate effect ’.[18] In these circumstances, the problem of accountability was not so much answered as ruled out of order. Infallibility had become a premiss of politics, bringing with it echoes of the charismatic leader who speaks the law. In 1623 Louis Roland, lauding Louis XIII as a divine monarch and a 4god common to all’, compared him to a celestial oracle.[19] By the time Le Sieur Guez de Balzac came to depict him in his *Le Prince* of 1631, rulcrship had transcended human wisdom altogether and become the vehicle of ‘insights that come immediately from God’; wisdom and truth were automatic to the king’s view of the world.[20] In England James was claiming divinatory powers as early as 1605 in the uncovering of the Gunpowder Plot. During the rule of his son autocracy led to the assertion of powers ‘so sublime that their exercise is inevitable, irresistible and benign’.[21] According to Justice Berkeley, one of the ship money judges, Charles I ‘had the laws in his own breast’.[22]

If the issue of ultimate legality gave rise to one form of supernaturalism, the nature of princely authority exercised on a discretionary basis raised the possibility of a second. Even where constitutionalist and absolutist strands of politics coexisted, rulership was conventionally divided between areas of ordinary power, regulated by the rules of positive law and disputable in the courts, and extraordinary power, where kings wielded non-dclcgable and indisputable ‘prerogatives’. Usually the latter were thought to pertain most appropriately to unusual situations or *arcana imperii,* where untrammelled regal action was necessary—an idea that again recalls the exceptional efficacy thought to belong to charismatic politics. In addition, it had become usual to compare the double exercise of princely power with an analogous division in the control that God exerted over nature in general. In the context of what Francis Oakley (following Kantorowicz) has called ‘political theology’, the ordinary power of kings was likened to God’s normal allowance of secondary causation according to the regular course of natural laws. The exercise of royal prerogative, on the other hand, became an analogue of the miracle—the political equivalent of an exceptional intervention in the pattern of events to bring about unlooked-for providences or to demonstrate omnipotence. In such instances, the normal forms and the regular course of the law might—indeed, must—be set aside.[23]

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[11] **Jacques Hurault, *Politicke, moral, and martial discourses,* trans. A. Golding (London, 1595), 115; Church, *Constitutional Thought,* 311.**

” Roland, *Dignite du roy,* 17-18. . . , r n-

[20] **Cited by McGowan, *Ballet de cour,* 175; cf. Pierre Wattcr, ‘Jean Louis Guez de Balzac s *Le Prince:* A Revaluation*,/. *Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* 20 (1957), 232. Cf. Goubcrt, *L'Ancien Regime,* ii. 34, for Louis XI V’s claim to participate in the knowledge as well as the authority of God.**

[21] **Parry, *Golden Age Restor'd,* 185, and, on James’s ‘Solomonic’ claims, 26-37. For typical contemporary celebrations, see J[oscph] H[all], *An holy panegyrick. A sermon preached at Paules Crosse ...Mar 24* /6/3(London, 1613),88; Hay, *Vision of Balaams asse,* 119 (lam indebted to Peter Elmer forthis reference); John Williams, *Great Britains Salomon. A sermon,preached at the,funerall, ofthe KingJames*(London, 1625).**

[22] **Cited by Perez *Zavorin, Rebels and Rulers, 1500-1660* (2 vols.; Cambridge, 1982), i. 93. ,**

[22] **Francis Oakley. ‘Jacobean Political Theory: The Absolute and Ordinary Powers of the King, *J. Hitt. Ideas,* 29 (1968), 323-46; cf. id, ‘The “Hidden" and “Revealed” Wills ofjames I: More Pohtrcal Theology’, *Studio Cratiana,* 15 (1972), 365-75; id., *Omnipotence Covenant .and Order,* 93-118 esp 109-10, where Oakley considers the tradition on a European scale; Weston and Greenberg, .M/erhamf *Sovereigns,* 12-22. For French parallels, see Church, *Constitutional Thought,* 63-5,141-2.**

This was the doctrine which Francis Bacon recognized in 2 rernarz 01 James I: ‘That Kings ruled by their laws as God did by the laws of nature, 2nd ought as rarely to put in use their supreme prerogative as God doth his po /• er of * G. zing miracles.[24] It was also adopted by Edward Forsct to support his extended comparison between sovereigns in the body politic, souls in the natural body, and God, who:

> albeit he worketh efficiently, and (if I may so say) natural!), bj the mediate causes, set his potencie is not so bv them tied or confined, but that he often performeth his owne pleasureby extraordinarie meanes, drawne out of his absolute power, both^rr/rr *el contra naturam.* So the soule, besides his usuall and functionarie operations, in and by the ministerial abilities of the bod v, hath other peculiar motions and actions of his owne; neither aided nor impeached by any corporiall assistance or resistance.[24 25]

Views such as these were often expressed in early Stuart England and owed their cogency to a mental climate in which (Oakley argues) theological analogies, and the theocratic conceptions of politics they presupposed, continued to play a powerful role in political debate. It was James I whom Kantorowicz himself chose to exemplify the mysticism that made *arcana imperii* the key concept of the new ‘pontificalism’ of the early modern states. It rested on the belief ‘that government is a *mysterium* administered alone by the king-highpriest and his indisputable officers, and that all actions committed in the name of those “Mysteries of State” are valid *ipso facto* or *ex opere operato,* regardless even of the personal worthiness of the king and his henchmen.’[26]

That the prerogative actions of rulers might be likened to miracles tells us a good deal about mystical notions of authority in the age of the witch trials. And that these actions should include relatively concrete matters like dispensing with statutes, calling parliaments, and declaring wars suggests that we might take even the more exotic claims more seriously. In 1567, in a thoroughly conventional treatise in *the speculum principum* tradition, the Frenchman Jean Talpin argued that monarchs were divine beings precisely because they could, like Saul, David, and Solomon, perpetrate marvels, ‘As a property of their anointing kings are changed in their natures and have done marvels.’[27] According to Claude d’Albon it was principally this sort of power (which they, alone among men, possessed) that caused them to be so much venerated. Prototypes like Moses and Joshua had of course achieved spectacular miracles in the natural world. But Charlemagne too had stopped the sun for four hours to give him time to avenge the deaths of Roland and Oliver. Kings in general (d’Albon continued) had powers of divination and several, including David and instantly acquired a degree of wisdom beyond the reach of even the men. Numa Pompilius came to his secret wisdom by communicating with the Goddess Egcria; King Minos of Crete had conversations with Jupiter.[28] No French author on the subject failed to make absolutist capital out of the healing power of kings, while many also spoke of miraculous military successes achieved with the help of the royal oriflamme (the sacred banner of St Denis) and the fleur-de-lis.[29] In 1568 Francois de Belleforcst devoted an entire tract to the presages and miracles, both personal to the king and general to France, happening in the eight years since the start of the reign of Charles IX. His claim was that these were modern parallels to the miracles that had accompanied the deliverance of the Israelites under Moses and David. Sacred authority was the continuous ingredient in both contexts, old and new, and God's benedictive marvels revealed his desire to defend that authority against the 'Pharaohs' and 'Goliaths' of all ages.[30]

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[24] **Bacon, *Advancement*** **in JKorh, iii. 429.**

[25] **Forset, *Comparative***

[24] **Ernst H. Kantorowicz,**

This introduces the third and undoubtedly most familiar element in the supernaturalism that surrounded early modern rulers—inviolability. It was a commonplace that anointing not merely indicated royalty and enabled kings to share in the divinity, but conferred a protective sacrosanctity on their persons. This was invariably (and graphically) illustrated by David's summary execution of the Amalekite who brought news of his killing of Saul (2 Samuel 1: 1-16).[31] Rebellion, invasion, even assassination might succeed but only if God removed the safeguards that normally surrounded rulers. D'Albon explained that angels were appointed for their defence and he listed their miraculous preservation in many periods of ancient history.[32] This was such a popular general theme that the apologetics for monarchy in this period are suffused with it. But it could lead to some vivid and quite concrete ideas concerning the literally disarming aura of holiness which rendered rulers immune from physical attack (just as infallibility placed them beyond the reaches of any moral challenge and turned criticism into a kind of sacrilege). This was one of the main themes of a tract of 1587 by the Elizabethan lawyer Richard Crompton, occasioned by the Catholic conspiracies leading to the execution of Mary Stuart. Crompton's general commitment was to divine-right monarchs whom God had 'annoynted and consecrated' in office, 'whose judgments are holden for lawes', and to whom a Pauline obedience was due.[33] Elizabeth herself was preserved from rebels and traitors by the special providence accorded to all sacred beings and, accordingly, had defeated the Catholic plotters with more than the force of arms:

> they ... which have thus conspired to take your iMajesty from us, when they have come into

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" D^Mbon, *De la znajn/Z no'a/^»*fos.29'-31';cf.Grassaille,7fr£a/Hnn Franny 41.

" e.g. Grassaillc, *Regalium Franciae.* 62-5; Saconay, *De la providence de Dieu.* 11; [I.P.R.], *De droit divin.* 20-1; Louis Maimbourg, *De Galliae regum excellentia* (Rouen, 1641), 26-34, who said that the royal healing power made nature itself subject to the king's will.

M Belleforcst, *Discours des presages el miracles, passim-,* for another Charles IX marvel, see Bouuer, Dewerpe, and Nordman, *Un tour de France.* 344.

[31] e.g. Bignon, *De Fexcellence des roys.* 502,511.

[33] D'Albon *De la majeste royalle.* fos. 24ᵛ–6ʳ, 16ʳ–17.

» Richard Crompton, *A thort declaration of the ende of trayton, andfalse contp.ratort agamet the elate, andof the duetie oftubjeclettotheyrsoveraignegovemour*(London, 1587),sigs.Dm,Eiv, Div.

> your presence, meaning then to have accomplished theyr most tray terous purpose, have beene so dismayed upon the sight of your princely person, and in beholding your most gracious countenaunce, that they had no power to performe the thing, which they had before determined upon.[34]

This is reminiscent of d’Albon’s view that majesty could be expressed corporeally in a splendour that ordinary men found physically unbearable. He reported that Alexander, king of Macedon, had actually blinded the Indians with his presence, and that sparks of fire issued from the body of Theodoric, king of Italy.[35] The Oxford divine and royal chaplain John Rawlinson spoke in the same vein.‘The excellency of Princely dignity shines in the very face and countenance of a King,’he told a St Paul’s cross audience in 1614; ‘For there is Character *tremendus in vultibus Regum'.* An impression or character of dreadfull Majestie stampt in the very visage of a King.’[36]

To attribute to princes the power literally to dazzle their foes to the point of impotence sounds extravagant and fanciful. But it was consistent with a mystical conception of rulership, and, again, Proverbs could be cited and glossed in its support (see 20: 8, cited at the opening of my next chapter). This was one of two texts chosen by the Toulouse jurist Pierre de Belloy for the title-page of his *De l’authorite du roy,* the first full treatment of divine-right theory in France; and it has overtones of all the supernaturalisms we have considered. It is suggestive of inerrant, irrevocable decree, it indicates miraculous efficacy, and it points to a manna of impregnability to injury or profanation.[37] It might be the ocular equivalent of the principle of *lex loquens,* and its most usual metaphorical application was to the vigilant, personal administration of royal justice.[3]” Nor should we forget the merely civil efficacy of seeing and being seen by the prince. During Charles IX’s eminently visible royal progress of 1564-6 the first consul of Montauban proclaimed: ‘It is a very great honour and a supreme joy for all faithful and loving subjects to look upon the face of their prince, and an even greater one to be seen and heard by him.’ Through such encounters, it has been said, the political relationship between the personal monarch and his subjects was reasserted: ‘The gaze that binds the image and the action to the ideology of monarchy, or, conversely, that reveals the kingdom to the sovereign, is the principal instrument of political submission and domination.’[3]’

” ***Crompton, A short declaration, sig. Bii^{r}.*** [JS] ***D'Mbon, De la majeste royalle,fo. 30’.***

[M] **Rawlinson, *Vital rex,* 9. For further striking examples, see Starkey, ‘Representation through Intimacy’, 193.**

” **Belloy, *De l'authorite du roy,* title-page (the other text was Proverbs 20:2 (‘The fear ofa king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul’). The judgement of Belloy’s book is in Allen, *History of Political Thought,* 383 (and see 383-6); cf. McGowan, *Ballet de cour,* 175. For a woodcut illustrating the Proverbs text, see Grassaille, *Regalium Franciae,* 146.**

[M] **Examples are John Dod and Robert Cleaver, *A plaine and familiar exposition: of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth chapters of Proverbs* (London, 1611), 115-17; Thomas Cartwright, *Commentarii succeincti et dilucidi in Proverbia Salomonis* (Leiden, 1617), cols. 970-1; Ferdinand de Salazar *Exbositio in Proterbia Salomonis* (2 vols.; Paris, 1619), ii. cols. 240-3.**

” **Boutier, Dewerpe, and Nordman, *Un tour de France,* 326-8.**

Whatever we think about this idea of 'the primacy of sight in the field of politics', it is impossible not to see in the supposed force (real or metaphorical) of the royal gaze a further striking example of the adverse affinities with which this book has so often been concerned. The monarch who banished evil with a look was the antithesis of the magician or witch who inflicted it by the same means—by what John Webster called 'a kind of eye-biting';[40] and, indeed, such a monarch was invoked by Hermann Samson as the pattern for all witch-prosecuting magistrates.[41] The antithesis was exact precisely because the meaning of one action was so heavily implicated in that of the other. A huge moral gulf separated the royal power to fascinate from its counterpart in the world of witchcraft, just as a technological difference in kind separated the miraculous from the magical. All the same, the equivalences were quite as important as the disparities. There remains a sense in which mystical kingship and demonic magic were equally plausible facets of a single world of ideas, their hostility heightened by their very affinity. In an age when the powers of the first were enjoying very considerable theoretical enhancement—the practical realities of early modern absolutism are not for the moment at issue—the powers of the second might well have seemed commensurately threatening and their defeat just as politically satisfying.

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A tradition of political thought that re-emphasized the numinousness of monarchs need not necessarily have impinged on the magistrate class in general.[42] Yet it was universally urged that justice (with piety and arms) was a prerequisite of princely rule, and that its administration was an authentic expression of divinity—indeed, a replica of God's own justice. It was just this, said Pierre Poisson, that made God's kingly lieutenants what they were.[43] A popular maxim borrowed from Plutarch spoke of justice as the end of the law, the law as the work of the prince, and the prince as the image of God.[44] In yet another verse from Proverbs, invariably cited by divine-right theorists, God (in the guise of Wisdom) announced: 'By me kings reign, and princes decree justice' (8: 15).[45] 'Speaking' the law, even to the point of infallibility, was a focus of absolutist expectations; appointing and dismissing judges and inferior magistrates was deemed an absolute royal prerogative; and the judgements of the highest throne of justice were a model for those in the lower courts. The king was, thus, the hypostasis of justice. It was of the very essence of authority that 'descended' that it should create lesser magistrates in the image of the greatest, a principle illustrated by the king-like judges depicted in woodcuts of courtroom scenes in Jean Milles de Souvigny’s legal textbook *Praxis criminis perseqttendi* (1541), and by the image of the ‘tree of justice’, adopted by writers in France and the Spanish Netherlands. For this kind of substitution, Thomas Floyd also explained, Moses’s judicial creations were the obvious model.[46]

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[40] Webster, D/ipZoyrng, 24.

[41] Samson, *Neun ... Hexen Predict,* sig. Uiv', citing also Proverbs 25: 2: the honour of kings is to search out a matter'.

[42] It docs not seem to have inspired lawyers, according to Bouwsma, 'Lawyers and Early Modem Culture', 303-27.

« Poisson, *Traictfdela tnajecti rayalle,* fo. 11'; cf. Claude Fauchct, *Ongmecde.d.gmtezet magnate de France,* 2nd cdn. (Paris, 1606), fo. De Bret, *touveramete du roy,* 151-61; Muchcmbled, *Popu/ar Culture,* 225—6; Michel Reulos, 'La Place de la justice dans les fetes el ceremonies du xvt siecle', in Jacquot and *Konipon(c<ls.), Fetes de la Renaissance,*™. 71-80.

[44] Rawlinson *Vivat rex* 18' Jacques de *IAGUCSIC, Les Remonstrances* (Pans, 1611), 42, sec also 40-4 fornoSnsSXSn b authority and Tythago^ lels between divine rule over the universe and royal government over kingdoms; Anon., *Let Bnllante* [«r] *Fertuc du ihrotne dejuct.ee de Loutc uste)* (aris, 1 3) 2.

^^^*Pi^^clldnAg^RehlFd,* +-5, illustrates its use during the royal entries ofjames I in 1604.

In England, well before James I’s Solomonic pretensions, it was a literary and iconographical commonplace to associate Elizabeth with Astraea, the goddess of justice, and Deborah, the prophetess and judge of Old Testament Israel. Merbury wrote more prosaically that she was the principal magistrate ‘from whome is derived, and upon whome dependeth the power, and authoritie of all inferiour offices, and orders’.[47] Another English author described the judge as ‘an eye fixed in the kings scepter’.[43] Crompton’s conventional defence of the sacrosanctity of Elizabeth against traitorous Catholics began life as an address to the general sessions of the magistrates of Staffordshire and it ends with just as conventional an account of justice in a divine-right monarchy. Each judicial decision must be regarded as given *in loco principis.* Thus English justices were delegates of the monarch ‘whose personne in judgment they represent’.[49] The king, like another David, was God’s high steward, and ‘inferior powers of nobles, judges, and magistrates rest on him’, Laud told Charles I’s second parliament.[50] According to the royalist divine Peter Heylyn, there was a ‘golden chain in politics’, and it meant that judges had no more authority than what was given to them by the monarch.[51] Poisson was even more explicit on the subject of French justice: ‘All magistrates’, he said, ‘are only the ordinary keepers and trustees of justice, that they may distribute it in the name and in the absence of their superior.’[52] Pierre de L’Hommeau and Jean de Baricave, the latter refuting resistance theory at length, both explained that all magistracy was derived from heaven, the king’s immediately and all other types mediately from him.[53] In Germany, likewise, Amisaeus spoke of royal majesty as the fountain of all other judicial power, and Johann Friedrich Horn distributed the dignities and powers of magistrates downwards through the judicial and social pyramid.[54]

The logic of ‘descending’ authority also ensured the transfer of much of the rhetoric of mystical politics from the prince to his judicial subordinates—'structurally amplifying the personal effects of charisma (to borrow one formulation) by transmitting them along lines of established relationships'.[55] Many of the discussions of the divinity of magistracy in this period were conducted irrespective of the status of individual officials. For Guillaume de La Perrière the political function in civil society was performed simply by 'magistrates' (the other functions were those of priests, the military nobility, citizens, artificers, and husbandmen).. Of these he wrote indifferently: 'The exercise of Judgements, and authority of Magistrates, is a power from God, appointed unto man, who in this world doe hold the place of him to yeeld and give right unto everyone. Therefore Magistrates in their Judgements ought to imitate God.'[56] Similarly, Jean de Marconville applied the idealistic categories of the *speculum principum* tradition to the magistrate class as a whole and not merely to the prince, who was one of its species—the 'sovereign' magistrate, indeed.[57] A Tudor populist tract, the *Mirror for magistrates,* spoke of all magistrates as gods; so too did many of the givers of early Stuart assize sermons. In a Jacobean guide to their office, judges were asked to convey the usual manna of sacred authority by maintaining in their very countenance a 'serious kinde of awfull majestie'.[58] Indeed, wherever one looks the customary theocratic concepts and images are at work, underpinned both by the Roman law idea that judges and lawyers were *sacerdotes iustitiae* and by the divinely inspired Mosaic institution of the Israelite judiciary.[59] Two Old Testament injunctions to judges were noted in particular—Moses's own 'ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's' (Deuteronomy 1:17), and Jehoshaphat's 'Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment' (2 Chronicles 19: 6). Of course, the full majesty of kingship was not transferable to the officers of royal justice. But the notion of partaking in it to an appropriate degree set magistrates of every rank qualitatively apart from ordinary citizens. As Henry Valentine put it: 'A King is Imago Dei, the bright Image of God, and the most magnificent and conspicuous representation of the Divine Majesty; and wee joy in the Pictures of our friends, when we cannot behold their persons ... Inferiour and subordinate Magistrates are halfe pieces drawne from the head to the shoulders, or middle; but Kings are the Pictures of God at length.'[60] Even the royal manna might be transferred; in 1597 Rémy reminded the *advocats* of Lorraine that Ulpian had refused to allow blind lawyers to plead, on the grounds that only the sight of the judge could lead them to revere magistracy properly.[61]

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[46] Mentzer, ‘Self-Image of the Magistrate’, 28, 33, 39; Muchembled, *Temps des supplices,* 127-8; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladune, *L’État royal, 1-160-1610^3,* 1990), 331-50; Floyd, *Picture of a perJit common wealth,* 5, see also 41-6,65-6,75-6.

[47] Merbury, *Briefs discourse,* 7.

[48] Barnes, *Fourbookes of offices,* 142.

[49] Crompton, *Short declaration,* sigs. Eii’-Fii’ (quotation at Fii').

[50] Wdliarn Uud, *The Works* o/JrrWMAop *Laud* (7 vols.; Oxford, 1847-60), i. 84 (and esp. 83-7).

[51] [Peter Heylyn], *The rebells catechisme* (n.p. [Oxford], 1643), 15.

[52] Poisson, *Traicte de la majejte royalle,* fo. 38*.

[53] L’Hom T“£ *Maximes generalles,* h8: jK,n dc Baricavc’ *D’f‘n“ de la m[illegible] franfoise, et autres mona*’^•"(Toulouse, 1614),258; cf.Muchcmbled, *Le Temps des supplices,* 147; Charles Loyseau.Cwtj *Iwres du droict des offices,* cited by William F. Church, *Richelieu and Reason of State* (Princeton, 1972), 18, who says it was the accepted view’.

[54] Amisaeus, *De jure majestatis,* 231, see also 298-300; Hom, *Politicorum pars architectonica de civitate,* 364—75.

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[55] This is Marshall Sahlins's description of 'routinized charisma'; 'Other Times, Other Customs: The Anthropology of History', 518.

[56] La Perrière, *Mirrour of politic,* sigs. Ggi'-Ggiv' (quotation at Ggf); cf. Gnmaudet, *Puissance roy*[illegible], [illegible]8.

[57] Marconville, *Maniere de bien politer la republique.* Marconville sees magistracy in charismatic terms; it is a gift of God, a vehicle of political grace, derived from ancient heroism, and should be based on Mosaic [illegible]ices. S[illegible] fos. 3r, 6r, 7r, 51r-v.

[58] [illegible] *Four bookes of offices,* 139; cf. Christopher Morris, *Political Thought in England: Tyndale to Hooker* (London, 1953), 71.

[59] For the first of these, see Kantorowicz, Mysteries of State , 386.

[60] Valentine, *God save the King,* 5-6.

A particularly pure example of this way of thinking is found in a sermon originally given at Hertford assizes before Sir Henry Hobart, Lord Chief Justice of Common Pleas, and Sir Robert Haughton, judge of King's Bench, by the Essex minister William Pemberton. It was put into print in 1619 and dedicated not merely to Francis Bacon, then Lord Chancellor, but to the entire judicial and magistrate classes of England. The scope, as well as the eminence, of the audience at which he aimed, together with Pemberton's reliably Calvinist theology, make this a revealing text.[62] Its political sentiments belong entirely to the tradition of divine-right thought and its conception of magistracy is wholly providentialist and mystical. Pemberton argues in the usual fashion that power and authority, although wielded by men for the benefit of their fellows, cannot be derived from any human source and must be traced to a gift of grace. By a purely charismatic dispensation, God has 'stamped his image of Sovcraigntie in Kings and Caesars, set the Crowne upon their heads, put the scepter into their hands, and created them chiefe Monarches ... next under himselfe'.[63] Of this divinely commissive authority, all other forms of magistracy are derivatives. From and by kings 'God derives unto other Prime persons under them, their eminent dignitie, in places of lawfull authoritie'.[64] The divine impress is more or less according to rank and office; but all God's delegates are sacred and inviolable persons and all are, to some degree, his images among men. Of this eutaxy of prime and secondary movers in government ('this heaven of our politic') Pemberton gives this summary:

> God is the ordeyner of our King, the King the image of God, the Law the worke of the King, Judges the interpreters of our Law; Magistrates with them dispensers, Justice our fruit of Law dispensed, this fruit of justice the good of the people, the good of the people the honour of our King, this honour of our King, the glory of God, the ordeiner, orderer and blesser of all. And so in this regular and circular revolution, all motion begins in God, and ends in God.[65]

It followed that the duties of justices could be gleaned from an attentive reading of those scriptures—especially Deuteronomy—which spoke of the creation of magistracy in the Old Testament. Pemberton's sermon, entitled *The charge of God and the King, to judges and magistrates, for the execution of justice,* is an attempt to base a theory' of justice on the twin roles of Moses—first, as a prophet, receiving God's judicial commission, and then, as 'Prince and chiefe Ruler of God's people',[66] transmitting it to men in the form of instructions to the judges of Israel. From these could be derived all the necessary standards for hearing and judging cases without impediments or delays and for executing punishments with due regard for severity or clemency.

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[61] Remy, *Remonstrance*^ 699-700.

[62] On Pemberton as one of the 'puritans' supported by the third Lord Rich, see William Hunt, *The Puritan Moment: The Coming of Revolution in an English County* (London, 1983), 161.

[41] William Pemberton, *The charge of God and the king, to judges and magistrates, for execution of justice* (London, 1619), sig. A3'.

[M] Ibid., sig. A3'. **[45] Ibid., sig. A8*.** **[44] Ibid., 8.**

Pemberton believed that all English judges and magistrates (together with all ‘Counsellors, Pleaders, Advocates, Sollicitors, Shiriffes, Jurors, Witnesses ...’)[67] should follow these Mosaic ideals and make magistracy in early seventeenth-century England a true reflection of its divine and regal origins. To say that ‘the judgment is God’s’ (the text of the sermon) was to recognize a divine inspiration for the act of judging, the person who judged and his office, the causes and persons so judged, and the decision itself, if it was righteous. From first to last, Pemberton’s conception of the judicial process was theocratic.

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Arguments conducted in this manner show not merely that mystical conceptions of authority could reach beyond the narrow confines of textbook absolutism (even if into other texts) but that they were driven to by their inner logic. James Daly has argued that the English assize sermons accorded judges ‘nearly as much right as kings to be called gods, because they administered the king’s law, which should resemble God’s law’.[68] He confirms the impression that the theoretical reinforcing of absolute styles of rulership was expected to have implications throughout the judicial pyramid and not simply at its apex. In consequence, magistrates, like the servants of the royal Privy Chamber, may well have been expected to act as ‘agent-symbols’ of the Tudor and Stuart monarchs, representing these theocratic rulers both in action and in aspect.[69]

But what of the relevance of this to individual crimes and, in particular, to the world of the demonic? Did the undoubted popularity of this kind of thinking generate a sensitivity—even an antipathy—to magic and witchcraft which, at the level of political philosophy, matched that found among the witch-prosecuting magistrates and in the pages of their demonological supporters? If, as was urged earlier, demonism is (in principle) a threat only to authority which claims charismatic attributes, did theories of divine right identify its overthrow as a special vocation of rulers? Were they expected to pursue witches in the spirit ofjames VI of Scotland, who said he did it, ‘not because I am James Stuard [$/?], and can comaunde so many thousandes of men, but because God hath made me a King and judge to judge righteouse judgmente’?[70] In short, might not miraculous political powers be authenticated most effectively in magical contests; and might a general inviolability be translated into the particular protection afforded against spells and charms?

Depictors of ideal rulers and states routinely expected them to confront

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[47] Ibid. 11.

[M] J. W. Daly, ‘Cosmic Harmony and Political Thinking in Early Stuart England’, *Trans. American Philosophical Society,* 69 (1979), 10 (citing the assize sermons of Pemberton, Dickinson, Gray, and Younger). On the continuation of religious notions of justice in the assize sermons of the 18th c.» see Randall McGowen, ‘The Changing Face of God’s Justice: The Debates over Divine and Human Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England’, *Criminal Justice Hist.* 9 (1988), 63-98.

[w] I borrow the term, and the parallel, from Starkey, ‘Representation through Intimacy’, 192, 196—222

[70] *Calendar of the State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots, 1547-1603,* x. *1589-93,* ed. William K. Boyd and Henry W. Mciklc (Edinburgh, 1936), 524.

superstition and atheism.[71] Marconville and André Rivet in France, and Johannes Schuwardt in Germany, encouraged them more specifically to destroy (what Marconville called) 'the corruptions and conjurings of Magicians'; James VI and I said the same thing of witchcraft.[72] During his sermon on charismatic kingship (given to mark Charles I's Scottish campaign of March 1639 and the anniversary of his accession), Henry Valentine reminded his St Paul's audience that Saul was such a zealous ruler 'that he would not suffer a witch to live'.[73] Saconay reported Satan's hostility to the baptism of Clovis and claimed that anointing made all subsequent French kings especially odious to him and his 'ministers' the heretics, while at the same time ensuring the latter's powerlessness and defeat. The devil aimed at nothing more zealously than the overthrow of the rite of anointing and the removal of the symbols of royalty associated with it in the coronation ceremony—the crown, the sceptre, and the 'hand of justice'.[74] This is a suggestive reading of Huguenot political ambitions and it was echoed in Belleforcst's argument that the Calvinists were enchanters whose charms had none the less failed to affect the religious purity of Charles IX.[75] The prince's duty to eradicate heresy and idolatry, and by strong implication its demonic manifestations, was likewise a main theme of several much reprinted and translated seventeenth-century Catholic treatments of 'Christian politics', written to stem the tide (so it was said) of 'Machiavellian' and *'politique'* indifference. In one of the most popular, the Salamanca theology professor and preacher to the court of Spain, Juan Marquez, urged the power of Moses over the enchanters of Pharaoh as an archetype for early modern rulers.[76] It was in terms of such accounts that Pedro Antonio Jofreu felt able to recommend Ciruelo's warnings about the dangers of superstition and witchcraft to the viceroy of Catalonia in 1628.

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[71] e.g. Jacobus Omphalus, *De officio et potestateprincipis in republica bene acsanctegerenda* (Basel, 1550), 24; Veit Ludwig von Seckcndorff, *Christen-Stat* (Leipzig, 1693), bk. 1, 44-7, and in 'Additiones' (sep. pag.) 66-9, bk. 2,255-8,266-8, who urged the secular authorities to rule according to the Decalogue. On Seckcndorff, see Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline, 22.* For the theme in general, see Bcmd Roeck, 'Christlicher Idealstaat und Hexenwahn. Zum Ende der europäischen Hexenverfolgung', *Historisches Jahrbuch,* 108 (1988), 379-405, esp. 394-400.

[72] Quotation from Marconville, Afanrere *de bien policier la republique chrestienne,* fo. 11'; cf. André Rivet, *Instruction du prince chrestien* (Leiden, 1642), 99-100; Johannes Schuwardt, *Regententajfell darinnen volgegriindeter christlicher Bericht von der Obrigkeit, Standt, Namen, Ampt, Glück ... Belohnung und Strajfen* (Leipzig, 1583), 112-14; James VI and I, *Basilikon doron,* in *The Political Works of James I,* ed. C. H. McIlwain (Cambridge, Mass., 1918), 20. James's advice was repeated by Andrew Willet, *Ecclesia triumphant: that is, the joy of the English church for the coronation of prince James* (Cambridge, 1603), 'Preface to the Reader', in connection with the king's emulation of the model Old Testament monarchs. '

” Valentine, *God save the king,* 12. ” Saconay, *De la providence de Dieu,* 6,10,40.

[75] Bclleforest, *Discours des presages et miracles,* fos. 4'-5'.

7‘ J uan Marquez, *El Governador Christiano, deducido de las vidas de Moysen, yjosue, principes del pueblo de Dios,* 2nd edn. (Salamanca, 1619), 69-72, esp. 70 (the work went through at least six Spanish edns. and was trans, into French and Italian); cf. Pedro de Ribadcneira, *Tratado de la religiony virtudes que deve tener el principe Christiano, para governor y conservar sus estados* (Madrid, 1595), 166-7; Carolus Scribanius, *Institutiopolitico-Christiana* (Antwerp, 1625), 499-506; Claude Vaurc, *L'Estat chrestien, ou, maximespolitiques, lirees de I'escriture* (Paris, 1626), esp. 34-5. For Protestant parallels, see [John Maxwell], *Sacrosancta regum maiestas; or the sacred and royal prerogative of Christian kings* (Oxford, 1680), 283-304 (first pub. 1644). Jean Boucher's *Couronne mystique* opened with a lengthy plea for royal politics to be founded on piety and 'sacerdotality', before moving on to invite Louis XIII to hunt witches; see above, Ch. 25.

Any discussion of rulership grounded on biblical models encouraged the view that princes and magistrates should confront demonism—a link made explicitly in demonology itself, implicitly in many discussions of ideal monarchy,[77] and metaphorically in appeals to individual rulers.[78] Nevertheless, it cannot be said that this issue found a prominent place in the literature of political theory, even in adulatory accounts of kingship. For more sustained treatment of these themes we must look elsewhere—to occasions (real or imagined) when mystical politics was acted out rather than argued out, and witches were confronted allegorically rather than in courts of law. We need to turn to the closely linked worlds of the court festival and the epic poetry of chivalry.

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[77] See, for further examples, Francois Ragucau, *Legespoliticae, ex sacrae jurisprudentiaefintibus haustae, collectaeque* (Frankfurt/Main, 1586), 21-40,171-5; Robert Bellarmine, *De officio principis christiani* (Rome, 1619), 161-212,220-2; Nicolas Caussin, *De regnum Dei seu dissertations in libros regum in quibus quae ad institutionem principum illustriumque virorum totamquepoliticen sacram attinet* (Paris, 1650), 65-73. For a study of these and other treatments of the ideal prince's spiritual obligations, see R. Darricau, 'La Spiritualitc du prince', *XI'II* Siecle,* 62-3 (1964), 78—111.

[71] Such as Jacques Mahaut to Louis XIII in *Pane'gyrique au roy,* 49.

42

Spectacles of Disenchantment

> A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment, scattercth away all evil with his eyes.
>
> (Proverbs 20:8)

> Near to the floor I had a dais constructed ... to serve only as a place for the chairs of the King, the Queen Mother, and the princes and princesses ... At the other end of the room opposite the King, an imitation garden was made... this garden was the very place where the enchantress Circe made her abode ... in her hand she carried a golden staff of five feet in length, just as the Circe of antiquity used to when, by the touch of this staff, she turned men into animals and inanimate things.
>
> Being in the presence of the King, Minerva made a gift to him of the golden staff and of Circe, who, defeated and stripped of her power, went to sit below the place where the princes were.
>
> (Opening and closing scenes of *Balet comique de la royne* (1581), from Baldassarino Da Belgiojoso (Balthasar de Beaujoycux), *Balet comique de la royne,* 1582)

IN 1548 the future Philip II of Spain embarked on a long progress through the Habsburg lands in Italy, Germany, and the Low Countries. Made to celebrate his coming succession, it was interspersed with lavish festivals and pageants, and it culminated in a grand ceremonial entry into the city of Antwerp. On 22 August 1549 the party, which included the Emperor Charles V, reached the palace of the Regent of the Netherlands, his sister Mary of Hungary, at Binche in Hainaut. Here, there was a week of magnificent entertainments, the most elaborate being *L'Aventure du Chateau Tenebreux,* a two-day epic which pitted knights in a chivalric contest against an evil magician.[1] It opened with the 'Knights Errant of Belgic Gaul' pleading to the

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[1] The whole progress was recorded in Juan Cristobal Calvcte de Estrella, *Elfeliciuimo viaje d'elmuy alloy muypoderoso Principe Don Phelippe* (Antwerp, 1552), trans. Jules Petit, *Le Tres Heureux Voyage fait par tres-haut et tris puissant prince Don Philippe,* Societe des Bibliophiles de Belgique, 7, 10-11, 15, 16 (Brussels, 1873-84). The entertainment of the *Chateau Tenebreux* at Binche is in no. 11 (vol. 3 of the 5 vols.), 100-33. Commentary in Roy Strong, *Art and Power; Renaissance Festivals, HS0-1650* (Woodbridge, 1984), 91-5; Daniel Devoto, 'Folklore ct politique au Chateau Tenebreux', in Jean Jacquot (cd.), *Fetes de la Renaissance,* ii. *Fetes et cerlmonies au temps de Charles Quint* (Paris, 1960), 311-28. For other aspects of the Binche festivals, sec Daniel Heartz, 'Un divertissement de palais pour Charles Quint à Binche', ibid. 329-12, and Albert van der Put, 'Two Drawings of the Fetes at Binche',/. *Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* 3 (1939—40), 45—57. For other festivals during Philip's voyage, sec Jean Jacquot, 'Panorama des fetes et ceremonies du rigne: Evolution des thimes et des styles', in id. (ed.), *Fetes de la Renaissance,* ii. 440-67.

Emperor for help against the mighty sorcerer, Norabroch, who lived in an enchanted castle which was always covered by a fulginous cloud. Next to the castle was the *lie Fortunée* bearing three columns, one with a sword embedded in it and the other two with inscriptions on them announcing that, 'The Knight who comes to draw the sword from the column will put an end to the Adventure, break the evil charms *(channes malefiques),* and free the prisoners who are captive in the *Château Ténébreux,* which he will destroy.' Would-be candidates had first to prove themselves in a sequence of preliminary combats, and these provided the high chivalry that made up the main body of the entertainment. Eventually, one of them seems to be on the point of seizing the sword but then it emerges that only a prince can fulfil the prophecy completely and go on to overthrow the magician. This is finally accomplished when the knight 'Beltcnebros' (i.e. Philip) wins each of his combats, draws the sword, finds the clouds dispersed and a route to the castle open, and defeats the guards at the entrance. The victory itself is achieved by his breaking of a magic phial which hangs by the gate and contains 'all the power of the evil charm' which protects Norabroch. Instantly, the doors fall open and his prisoners are freed.

This combination of chivalric tournament and literary romance was animated by a profusion of themes. Many of them—including the phial encapsulating magical power, the enchanted castle with its captives, and the sword awaiting withdrawal from stone or tree—were wholly traditional, even folkloric.[2] But with its full paraphernalia of knightly arms and exploits this was one of the most extravagant and colourful of all the court festivals of the sixteenth century. Precisely because of its success at the level of spectacle (and not despite this), *L'Aventure du Château Ténébreux* also fulfilled the important political purpose of helping to ease Philip into his difficult inheritance as ruler of the Low Countries in his father's lifetime. Drawing on the ancient motif of ritual initiation, it presented him as the worthy heir to a sovereignty already detached from that of the Empire and unified by the 'pragmatic sanction' of the same year. In effect, Beltcnebros achieved feats that only Prince Philip might accomplish. The act of recognition associated with drawing the sword and dispelling the magic identified him as the legitimate successor to Charles V, anticipated the symbolism of his coronation ceremony, and even pointed forward to the benefits of his reign; the inscription on the *fie Fortunée* spoke of the successful knight achieving 'many valiant deeds which cannot be made known now but which are promised and intended for him'.

In addition to these ingredients, whether traditional or topical, this entertainment is clearly concerned with monarchical authority as such. Daniel Devoto has suggested that in its symbolism and its brilliance lay an encoded message about kings being chosen by the sovereign will of God.[3] The actions of Beltenebros are those of a (future) ruler by divine right and therefore go well beyond military prowess or even the physical feat of pulling the sword from its jasper column. In his hands the weapon symbolizes powers unique to sacred kings. It enables him to see the evil which is invisible to other eyes, destroy it, and free those under its spell—all emblematic of a justice wrought in God's name. Nor is the evil merely routine. What is significant about the Binche entertainment is not only the distancing of a monarch from even his most gifted subjects but the symbolic elevation of a demonic magician as his most appropriate foe. Norabroch is so powerful that he is invincible to ordinary men, the terrible din and the awful cries that emerge from his stronghold are enough to daunt them. His contest with Bcltencbros is evidently the ultimate version of the knightly encounters which precede it—the usual trial of strength raised to an altogether higher plane. Its significance, like theirs, rests on a principle of equivalence which makes the contenders fitting opponents and gives meaning and value to the achievement of the victor. A kind of chivalry of the supernatural demands that a sacred ruler should be proven in combat with a worthy assailant armed with comparable weapons; here, too, miracle and magic enjoy a kind of symmetry in opposition. Victory is, in principle, assured to all recipients of sacred power and the actual success of any individual is *ipso facto* a legitimation of his authority. For all its extravagant detail and complex effects, the entertainment is a simple narrative device to ensure that this happens. In *L 'Aventure du Chateau Tenebreux* it occurs at the moment when the magical phial is shattered. Here, another familiar motif from the literature of folktale and romance—the instantaneous efficacy of marvellous action—highlights the properties of political miracles and those divine and absolute rulers who perform them.

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[2] Devoto, 'Folklore et politique au Château Ténébreux', 318-26.

[2] Ibid. 326.

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For all its dependence on the past, it has been recognized that Binche reflected contemporary changes in attitudes to political authority. The suggestion is that the central and novel requirement that the ultimate victor in what was otherwise a chivalrous romance must be a prince was the theatrical counterpart of the newly assertive royalism that marked the political culture of the second half of the sixteenth century. For the first time in a court festival, the prince 'was uncompromisingly presented as a divinely ordained deliverer, defeating evil, breaking spells, rescuing the afflicted through his valour alone'.[4] But it could be said with equal force that attitudes to evil also changed in this period, as demonism and witchcraft impinged more and more on the minds of writers of demonology and magistrates alike. If (as I have argued) the demonic had a particular resonance for those who thought of authority as divinely ordained, this would suggest that Binche was also the occasion for a complementary emphasis on magic—both as the principal threat to a social order dependent on sacred kingship, and as the most revealing test-case of its protective powers The festivals of 1549 achieved considerable renown throughout Europe and the were recorded twice in Spanish, French, and German, and once in Italian [5] By the end of the century the monarch-figure who pitted himself against magical powers and instant!} dissolved their charms was appearing regularly in court festivals everywhere. As in ancient Babylon, so in early modern Europe: ‘Civilised existence was conceived to represent a god-given and divinely established order and the king acted as its guardian against chaos which was unleashed by the uncontrolled, anarchic powers of demons.’[6] As a symbolic idiom, demonism entered a century-long period of theatrical popularity with the political elites of the age.

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[4] Strong, *Art and Power,* 93-4. Cf.Jacquot, Introduction, in id. (cd.), *Fetes de la Renaissance* ii 10 who says that between 1520 and 1549 'les jeux guerriers donnenl lieu 1 une misc en scene romanesa les enchantements sont meles aux exploits chevaleresques.* 4 c ou

[5] Bibliography in Devoto, 'Folklore et politique au Chateau Tenebreux', 326-8.

In February 1564, for example, the ‘magnificences’ of Catherine de Medici at Fontainebleau culminated in two examples of entertainments based on the theme of the *chateau encliante*. In the first, Charles IX and his brother rescued the prisoners of a tyrant from an enchanted tower guarded by ‘furies infernales’, so fulfilling a prophecy that spoke of their deliverance at the hands of the scions of a dynasty of perfect princes. As they fought their way into the building, it lost its magical properties, to be consumed, finally, by fire.[7] The next day the King repeated the exploit during a tournament of his own devising. This time the enchanted castle had a door guarded by devils, as well as a giant and a dwarf.[8]

A little over a year later, during the first lull in the religious wars, when Charles’s great ceremonial progress through France had reached the far south-west, the theme was utilized again in the course of the festivals that marked the meeting of the French and Spanish courts at Bayonne. As at Binche, vital political interests were at stake, above all, Catherine de Medici’s ability to convince the envoys of her son-in-law that, despite internal discord, France was still a rich, powerful, and influential nation (and thus a worthwhile ally), and that religious pacification, not confrontation, was still the best way to ensure order within and between nations. On this occasion, the captive to be freed from enchantment becomes ‘Peace’ and the prophecy speaks of her knight rescuer not merely as a paragon of military prowess and moral virtue, but as one who will bring harmony to Christendom by banishing discord and vice and restoring it to a flourishing state. As usual, proof of such abilities lies in negotiating a series of half-military, half-magical contests which leave other men defeated or bewitched; this is a world where the elements of chivalric tournament and religious exorcism are once again indistinguishable. The castle itself is constructed by ‘magic art’ and guarded by demons and spirits. It is taken, this time by Charles IX alone, and its demonic enchantments dissolved. But before the assault can begin six knights and six ladies have to be re-metamorphosed from the rocks and trees into which Circe has changed them. In an echo of the main device and its political allusions, Circe boasts

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- Amelie Kuhrt, ‘Usurpation, Conquest and Ceremonial: From Babylon to Persia’, in Cannadinc and Price *(eds.)*, *Rituals of Royalty. 3Q.*

[7] There is a contemporary account in the anonymous *Lt Recutil des tnumphes et magnificences qui ont estezfaictes au loti; de Monseigneur It Due Dorleans* (1564), repr. in Victor E. Graham and W. McAllister Johnson *The Royal Tour of France by Charles IX and Catherine de' Medici. Festival; and Entnes, 1564-6* (Toronto, 1979), 147-69, commentary at 25-7. The reference to Tunes infernal^’ is in Castelnau *Mimoires de Michel de Castelnau,* 500. See also Strong, *Art and Power,* 104-5; Pierre Champion, *Ronsard elsontemps(?2.ns.\^2S).VTI-\\»*

- Strong *Art and Power.* 1 (M; the reference to the devils ism Abel Jouan,7taw«/rf ifcflwn/fa vqytfge *du roy Charles IX* (1566), repr. in Graham and McAllister Johnson, *Royal Tour of France.* 76.

of her ability as a witch to reverse night and day, give and take life, and transform the shapes of humans, but she is forced to concede the restorative force of the brotherly love which unites kings in true alliance. At this point, Charles’s sister and Philip II’s wife, Elizabeth, ‘by divine will’, performs the required ‘miracle’ of breaking the power of the charm and returning the prisoners to human form. The general (and unfulfilled) hope was that through her agency Philip would assist Charles in bringing the other ‘lofty designs that heaven had promised him’ to a similar conclusion.[9]

It was French taste in court festivals that probably brought the motif of the enchanted castle to England in 1582, during a Christmas entertainment in which the Due d’Anjou and Elizabeth I took on the role of the princely deliverers.[10] The pattern established at Binche had now become perfectly standardized, as the memoirs of the Due de Nevers make clear:

> The Christmas festivities finished with a piece of sorcery *(un sortilege)* concerning some enchanted knights in a castle, imprisoned there by a magician until they could be delivered from it by means of a most excellent and magnanimous prince, and ever the most constant in love, and by the most chaste, virtuous, and heroic princess in the world ... who, after an attempt and a battle involving several valiant knights, finally opened a stairway without difficulty, and here, by extinguishing a flaming lamp, completely broke the charm and placed the prisoners at liberty.[11]

This is a perfect precis of the narrative elements of this particular festival tradition—its individual story-type, as it were. Essential to it is the familiar idea that true princely authority issues in a higher magic—a power distinguished by its capacity to destroy the effects of enchantment. In an important sense, the description ‘sortilege’ applies to the entertainment as a whole and to all its processes, not merely to its initial *mise-en-scene.*

It is evident, then, that the Binche story-type became a popular one. Even so, it was only one variant of the confrontation between monarchs and magic which was the subject of so many of the court festivals of the later sixteenth century. Elizabeth herself again became a dispeller of charms in an entertainment of 1592 at Ditchley. She frees knights and ladies who have been imprisoned by ‘hard enchantment’ in the trees of a magic grove, unravels the occult meaning of a set of pictures charmed by

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[9] I have used the anonymous account, *Recueil des choses notables qui ont este faites d Bayonne d Pentreveue du Roy Treschrestien Charles neufieme de ce nom, el la Royne sa treshonorée mere, avec la Royne Catholique sa soeur* (1566), repr. in Graham and McAllister Johnson, *Royal tour of France'* 343-56 commentary’at 38-42. Other accounts in Boutier, Dewerpc, and Nordman, *Un tour de France royal* 314-23* cf. Strong, *Art and Power,* 106-7. In the first of the entertainments which made up the sequence of Bayonne magnificences, demons paid homage to Charles IX; *Recueil des choses notables* 337-41 At Beziers, the king’s arrival was enough to put an end to the pursuit of Diana by a eamr of catvre- R Dewerpc and Nordman, *Un tour de France royal,* 337.

[10] Thomas M. Greene, ‘Magic and Festivity at the Renaissance Court’, *Renaissance Quart* 40 (1987) 652, says there was ‘much enchantment in the plays performed at [Elizabeth I’s] court and in the entertainments during her progresses’, and that typically she ‘exercised her inherent potency, like the kings of France, to annul pernicious enchantment*.

[11] Louis [Gonzaga], Due de Nevers, *Les AUmoires de Monsieur le Due de Nevers Prince de Alantoue (2* vols.; Paris, 1665), i. 557.

‘infemall Arte’, and unties the spell that keeps an old knight Loricus in a perpetual sleep. Each feat is attributed to the more than human virtue and wisdom of a goddess on earth, but the last is hailed as a healing miracle achieved by ‘the sole vertue of [her] sacred presence’. It is God who actually brings it about, insists Loricus’s chaplain, but a God who works through the divine power of‘so sacred a Prince’.[12] These were exactly the themes of John Lyly’s court play *Endymion* which was acted four years earlier. In it the divine empress Cynthia (signifying Elizabeth) achieves three feats of counter-witchcraft; she awakens Endymion from an enchanted sleep with a kiss and recovers his youthful appearance by promising him her favour, and she also restores to human shape a woman, Bagoa, metamorphosed into a tree, by using a ritual incantation enunciating the virtues of truth. When Cynthia denounces the witch responsible, Dipsas, it is clear that these miraculous powers are intrinsic to her political authority:

> Thou hast threatened to turn my course awry and alter by thy damnable art the government that I now possess by the eternal gods. But know thou, Dipsas, and let all the enchanters know, that Cynthia, being placed for light on earth, is also protected by the powers of heaven.[13]

Another example, this time from the Estc court at Ferrara, is the equestrian entertainment *Il tempio d 'amore*^ devised as part of the celebrations for the second marriage of Duke Alfonso II in 1565. Exceptionally rich in its invention and design, this (like Binche) was a major contribution to the genre of the *tournoi d theme.* Tasso certainly took a part in its preparation and may even have been the sole author. It opens with six aged enchantresses (witches?) who, having failed to gain access to the Temple of Love (it becomes invisible when they look at it), decide to prevent others from visiting it, along with the two other Temples of Virtue and Honour to which it leads, by disguising themselves and by setting up a defensive screen of impregnable magical forces. Part of their arsenal is provided by evil spirits and they are assisted by male magicians. As usual, knights arrive to try their arms against the powers of darkness and are repulsed, or bewitched, or merely hoodwinked by maleficent sorcery. But a feature of this festival is the parallel and proportional escalation of valour on the one side and magic on the other—each increase in chivalric endeavour and resolution being met with ruses of greater and greater magical ingenuity, rather as if the same laws applied to both. The result is a sense of crescendo in the contests and a consequent enhancing of the princely intervention that finally ends them. The Knights of Virtue and Honour acting for Alfonso's bride Barbara of Austria bring a force greater than any magic, defeat the enchantresses (transforming them back into hags), and restore the Temple of Love; one of the three Graces explains that the presence and the power of the princess has allowed the destruction of the witchcrafts.[14]

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[12] The Ditchley entertainment is reprinted in E. K. Chambers, *Sir Henry Lee: An Elizabethan Portrait* (Oxford, 1936), 276-97, and in Jean Wilson, *Entertainments for Elizabeth I (Woodbridge,* 1980), 126-42 (commentary at 119-25). Wilson even suggests the giving of Christ-attributes to Elizabeth at Ditchley, comparing the chaplain’s remark, ‘whosoever blesseth her, blcsseth God in her’, with John 10: 38: ‘the Father is in me, and I in him.’ For Elizabeth’s ‘supemaluralism’ and miracles at the Elvetham entertainment of 1591, see ibid. 21-5, 97, 109-10; cf. her releasing of knights trapped in ‘Adamantine Rock’ in Orgel Jbiwmro *Masque,* 8-13. For a view of these entertainments and themes which allows for the presence in them of criticism and conflict, see Marie Axton, ‘The Tudor Mask and Elizabethan Court Drama’, in Marie Axton and Raymond Williams (cds.), *English Drama: Formsand Development* (Cambridge, 1977), 24-47.

[13] John Lyly, *Endimion, the man in the moon,* in *The Plays of John Lyly,* ed. Carter A. Daniel (London, 1988), 188; commentary in Axton, ‘The Tudor Mask and Elizabethan Court Drama*, 42-6. Further examples in Greene, ‘Magic and Festivity’, 652.

Ballet de cour was another festival form which celebrated this political equivalent of the exorcism. And it is significant that the pattern was established from the start. The entertainment that is regarded as having first realized court ballet as the unified expression of a diversity of art forms turns out to be 'infused with the influence of Renaissance magic'.[15] This was Balthasar de Beaujoyeux's *Balet comique de la royne,* danced in October 1581 at the wedding of the French Queen's sister and Henri Ill's favourite, the Due de Joyeuse. Its overt subject is the power of the witch Circe and her eventual overthrow by monarchical virtue. The former is expressed in the customary terms of imprisonment and metamorphosis; the latter is foreshadowed in the appeals of the fugitive Ulysses and, again, only arrives when previous combatants (in this case from mythology) have failed. Representing different aspects of the rule of Henri III, Jupiter and Minerva inspire the victory and lead the vanquished Circe to him to acknowledge her defeat. The political allegory is transparently clear but the visual integrity demanded by the ballet as a medium, and its use of the internal area of the *salle de danse,* rather than the outdoor expanses of the tournament field, mean that the spatial symbolism of confrontation is especially striking. The *Balet comique* opens with the Salle de Bourbon at the Louvre so arranged that Circe and Henri III sit enthroned at opposite ends of the room, facing each other in total and yet symmetrical hostility. The suggestion that her enchanted domain (palace and garden) is somehow the equal, if opposite, of his cannot be allowed to linger; immediately she acknowledges her weakness in allowing the escape of Ulysses and her final downfall is thus intimated. But for an instant it is impossible not to sense the principle of equivalence at work.[16]

“ The contemporary account is in Agostino Aricnti, *Le cavallerie della citta di Ferrara* (Ferrara, 1566), 11-106.1 have followed the analysis of Irene Mamczarz, 'Une fete equestre a Ferrare: *Il tempio d'amore* (1565), in Jacquot and Konigson (eds.), *Fetes de la Renaissance,* iii. 349-72, sec esp. 352: 'Les conventions et les regies du combat et du tournoi, etablies par la tradition medicvalc, sont transposees ici dans le monde de la fiction dramatique et deviennent "lois magiques".' There is a short account by Margaret M. McGowan, 'Adventure and Theatrical Innovation at Ferrara and Mannheim', in J. Salmons and W. Moretti (eds.), *The Renaissance in Ferrara and its European Horizons/IlRinascimento a Ferrara e isuoiorizzonti Europei* (Cardiff and Ravenna, 1984), 66-70. Cf. Strong, *Art and Power,* 52-3. Claude Francois Mencstrier reported that there had also been a Carnival entertainment for the Duke of Ferrara in 1561 involving a 'Chateau merveilleux'; *Des ballets anciens et modemes selon les regies du theatre* (Paris, 1682), 228—9.

” Yates, *Occult Philosophy,* 69. See also Rousset, 'Circe et le monde renverse', 31-6, for the themes of enchantment, metamorphosis, and deliverance in French court festivals.

“ Baldassarino Da Belgiojoso [Balthasar de Beaujoyeux], *Balet comique de la royne faict aux nopces de Monsieur le Due de Joyeuse* (Paris, 1582). There is a facsimile edn. by Margaret M. McGowan in Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 6 (Binghamton, NY, 1982). Summary and commentary in McGowan *Ballet de cour,* 42-7; cf. Strong, *Art and Power,* 119-22; Frances A. Yates, *The French Academies of the*

Twelve years later, in a pale reflection of the *Balet comique,* the *béarnais* court of Henri IV’s sister Catherine substituted Medea for Circe and made her defeat an emblem of the overthrow of Spain. In the *Ballet de Madame de Rohan* France is enervated by magic arts which only the superhuman resources of the Bourbons can counteract. The sense of opposition is not merely spatial and moral but rhetorical—it is built into the verses:

> Vicns done, Nymphc royallc, ct oppose au scavoir
> Des demons ennemis le celeste pouvoir,
> Aux tenebres lc jour qui ton chef environne,
> A ses efforts lascifs la pudique couronne,
> Convcnable orncment de ta virginite,
> Au vice la vertu ct sa divinile;

The very name of the Bourbon house has counter-magical qualities. Its pronunciation is alone sufficient to break Medea’s enchantments. The ballet ends with her bitterly conceding the force of this higher power and with demons muttering about a ‘Trcs-vcrtueuse ct tres-noble Princess’ through clenched teeth. The intimations of an exorcism in theatrical guise are again unmistakable.[17]

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If in the later sixteenth century the themes of the Binchc entertainment were more and more popular with planners of court festivals, in the earlier seventeenth they became something of a preoccupation—especially in France. Between 1610 and 1619 three major Louvre ballets were danced, enjoying the full artistic and social patronage of the court, and inspired, if not actually devised, by the monarch himself. They were *Ballet de Monseigneur le Due de Vandosme* (1610), *Le Ballet de la delivrance de Renaud* (1617), and *Le Ballet de Tancrède(\(A9).* Each was based on what Margaret McGowan calls ‘le thème romanesque par excellence’—the theme of deliverance—and each expressed this in terms of disenchantment by kings. In the 1620s and 1630s, when Parisian court entertainments became less serious and tastes turned more to the comic and the burlesque, the tradition was continued in the provinces by the aristocracy of Languedoc *(Le Ballet du Véritable Amour,* 1618), the *pensionnaires* of the Jesuit college at Reims *(La Conquête du Char de la Gloire par le Grand Théandre,* 1628) and the seigneurs of Avignon *(La Délivrance des Chevaliers de la Gloire par le Grand Alcandre Galois,* 1638). And in 1664, when Louis XIV approved the subject for the first of the lavish Versailles entertainments, in which Molière and Lully were employed, his choice fell again on *Les Plaisirs de Pile Enchantée* (incorporating *Le Ballet du Palais d'Alcine).*™

Sixteenth Century (London, 1947), 236-74; cad., *Astraea,* 165-6; Greene, ‘Magic and Festivity’, 649-51, who suggests that the intervention of‘vertical’ powers in what was essentially a ‘horizontal’ confrontation points to uncertainty about the actual powers of Henri III.

[17] *Ballet de Madame de Rohan,* in Lacroix, *Ballets et mascarades de tour,* i. 117-34; commentary in McGowan, *Ballet de cour,* 58-61, and Strong, *Art and Power,* 124-5. The verses might be translated: ‘So come, royal nymph, and oppose the wisdom of hostile demons with celestial power; oppose the shadows with the daylight that surrounds your master; oppose their lewd designs with the chaste crown, fitting adornment of your virginity; oppose vice with virtue and your divinity.’

[11] For the broad trends in *ballet de* roar after 1600,1 have relied on McGowan, *Ballet de cour,* 69-227.

The point of departure of these later festivals continued to be the powers of quintessential witch figures from mythology or romantic epic—Alcinc’, ‘Armide’, ‘Coelide’, ‘Zirphce’, and, in the *Ballet de Tancrede,* a male necromancer and commander of devils borrowed from Tasso, the magician ‘Ismeno’. As before, they are demonstrated in the captivity or transformation of token victims, or in illusory or disorderly happenings. But now the demons too are everywhere. They defend Alcine in her magic palace, swarm around Armide in grotesque animal shapes, and, at Ismeno’s command, fill a whole forest with apparitions, fire, and horrible noises. They drop from the skies and rise from the earth for Zirphce in Avignon, in Paris in 1641 they invade *Le Ballet de la Prosperity des arntes de la France* and turn a scene of peace and harmony into a chaos of disorder and tumult.[19] In the *Ballet du Veritable Amour* there is even a reference to the sabbat. Robbed of her magic by the countermanding valour (and marital bliss) of the governor of Languedoc (Henri II Due de Montmorency), Coelidc becomes so desperate that she runs off to a cave to consult the witches who arc holding a meeting there.[20] In the *Ballet de Tancrede,* too, the forest which Ismeno demonizes against the hero-warrier Godfrey de Bouillon and his knights had been, on its original appearance in *La Gerusalemme liberata,* a nocturnal meeting and feasting place for witches.[21] Ismeno himself is evidently a demonic figure (his first entry is through a hole in the stage) and he enjoys control over the powers of hell.

With the demonological element exaggerated,[22] so, correspondingly, was the restorative force of kingly authority. In the *Ballet de Monseigneur le Due de Vandosme*

On the theme of deliverance, sec her remarks at 72,174, and Bardon, *Le Portrait mythologique d la courde France,* 227—33, see also 39-43.

[19] The demonological references are in Lacroix, *Ballets et mascarades,* i. 237, 247, 259-62 (Alcinc); McGowan, *Ballet decour,* 106 and plate XI (Armide); Scipion de Gramont, *Relation du grand ballet du roy, dance en lasalledu Louvre le I2.fevrier, 1619 sur Padventure de Tancredeenla Forest enchantee (Paris,* 1619), 7-8 (Ismeno); McGowan, *Ballet de cour,* 203 (Zirphee), 187 (*Ballet de la Prosperite).*

[20] Cited McGowan, *Ballet de cour,* 198.

[21] Sec canto xm, strophe iv of *La Gerusalemme liberata,* referring to the glades of the wood; Torquato Tasso, *La Gerusalemme liberata,* cd. F. Chiappelli (Turin, 1968), 232-3: ‘Qui s’adunan le streghe, cd il suo yago | con ciascuna di lor nottumo vicne; | vicn sovra i nembi, e chi d’un fero drago, | e chi forma d’un irco informe ticne: | conciglio infame, che fallace imago | suol allettar di desiato bene | a celebrar con pompe immonde c sozzc | i profani conviti c Pempie nozze.’ For contemporary assimilations of Tasso’s poetic witches to those described in the literature of witchcraft, see Giulio Guastavini, *Discorsi et annotation sopra la Gierusalemme liberata di Torquato Tasso* (Pavia, 1592), 229-31; and for an esp. clear example of a witchcraft author absorbing them, sec de Lancre *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et demons,* 124-5 (‘Le Tasse dcscrivant l’enchantcment que fit Ismenus magicien et sorcier dans la forest de Hierusalcm, semble dcscrire le sabbat tout de mesme que nos sorciers le nous depcignent’). For the whole question of Tasso and demonology, see Stuart Clark, ‘Tasso and the Literature of Witchcraft’, in Salmons and Moretti (eds.), *Renaissance in Ferrara,* 3-21.

[22] For other occasions involving witchcraft, *see Mascarade des sorciers, Le Ballet des sorciers* (1601) and *Ballet des vieilles sorcieres* (1604), listed by McGowan, *Ballet de cour,* 254, 258, 261; Isaac de Benseradc *Ballet royal de la nuit...* dansé par*Sa Majesti en 1653,* in id., *Les CEuvres de Monsieur De Bensserade* (2 pts’ in 1 vol.; Paris, 1698), pt. 2,14-71 (in this *ballet,* in which Louis XIV himself danced, there is a meeting (perhaps a sabbat) of the four most popular enchantresses, Medea, Circe, Alcine, and Armide). The Collection Philidor also records an entry of‘Sorciers’ in the *Ballet de Henry le Grand* (1598k see Francois Lesure,‘LcRecueildeballetsdcMichelHenry(versl620)’,inJacquot(ed.),Fr/«r/Ja/?ia^ i 209

Henri IV achieved one of the most striking feats of counter-magic in the repertoire. Although he was not a physical participant in the *ballet,* its entire impact depended on his presence in the audience. Alcine first defies him and then subsequently recognizes that he wields superior power, on both occasions drawing him directly into the action. But considered simply as a spectator his role is decisive. The deliverance of twelve knights from enchantment is effected ‘merely by a glance from the greatest king on earth’. We have already come across the royal power to fascinate and the text from Proverbs 20: 8 which gave it metaphorical foundation. Literally by looking on—by what in the popular language of bewitchment would have been called ‘overlooking’—the King breaks the enchantment which has immobilized Alcine’s victims. As his glance falls on each of them in turn, they are, in effect, un-witched. One by one they return to life and dance towards his throne in homage and thanks.[23] It has been suggested that the perspective staging of early modern court plays and masques made the royal throne their visual as well as moral reference point. It privileged the king’s viewing point and thus emphasized his unique political eminence and the graded status of those around him (who watched from more or less ‘incorrect’ angles).[24] The *Ballet de Monseigneur le Due de Vandosme* adds to this capacity to visualize the ideal world without distortion a power to achieve its realization by sight. Just as the revels joined actors and audience in an affirmation of the unity of the theatrical and political worlds, so the line of the royal gaze ordered the illusions of the stage into a reality and then confirmed this visual control by acting on it.

There is nothing quite like this in the other seventeenth-century entertainments. But in 1617 and 1619, Louis XIII played the part of the deliverer Godefroy and, on the first occasion, acted out one of the most spectacular visual emblems of absolute monarchy by rising in apotheosis to the pinnacle of a golden pavilion, with his courtiers and subjects arrayed beneath him:

> All of them became visible in turn as this great pavilion revolved, and just as one sometimes hears the people who arc gathered for worship cry out together at the appearance of some miracle, so one heard the whole assembly give its plaudits at the sight of this pavilion, enriched with so many exceptional persons.[25]

In the *Ballet de Tancrède,* the king’s agent Tancrède has the knightly resolution required to enter the hideous wood and, in another version of the customary motif, this alone is enough to disarm the magic of Ismeno and force its instantaneous

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[u] *Ballet de Monseigneur le Due de Vandosme* (1610), in Lacroix, *Ballets et mascarades,* i. 239,261-2; cf. a Jacobean masque, *The masque of beauty* (1608), II. 28-9 (referring to the King): ‘Behold whose eyes do dart Promethean fire | Throughout this all*; text in Orgel and Strong (cds.), Inigo Jones, i. 93. During James I’s entry into London in 1604 ‘the vertuc of a Regall eye’ was enough to restore order and harmony to the ‘orb’ of England, depicted on one of many triumphal arches as awry since the death of Elizabeth; *Virry,Golden Age Restor'd,* 15.

[24] Wilson, *Entertainments.* 9; Orgel and Strong (cds.), Inigo Jones, i. 7; Elliott, *Spam and its World.* 143-4; J. E. Varey, ‘The Audience and the Play at Court Spectacles: The Role of the King’, *Bull. Hispanic Stud.* 61 (1984), 401,403-1.

[25] Cited McGowan, *Balletde cour.* 107-8, and see plate XIV of her book.

disappearance." At Reims in 1628 the Jesuits depicted Louts as fheandre, who easily defeated the giants of an enchanted Black Tower by wielding the sword of the most miracle-bound of all French kings-Clovis?' And m 1638 at Avignon he became Alcandrc, the vanquisher of Zirphee and her demons." Louts XIV continued the tradition with enthusiasm. Having been celebrated at birth in this same Avignon entertainment, he himself took on the role, twenty-six years later, of Ariosto's knight Ruggiero, and, armed with the magic ring of Melisse, dissipated the enchantments of Alcine and instantly destroyed her palace (built for the occasion on an island in a Versailles lake) in a shower of fireworks. This was despite the attentions of four giants, four dwarfs, eight Moors, several monsters—and the ubiquitous demons.[29]

Festivals with these same themes were celebrated in Naples in 1612 and in Florence in 1625. In 1627 the Court of Savoy included in its entertainments for Carnival a *Ballet de Circe chassee de ses Etats* which opened with the spells of witches and closed with their undoing at the hands of the Duke.[30] In the Conde de Villamediana's play *La gloria de Niquea,* staged at the Spanish court in 1622 to celebrate Philip IV's birthday, the royal hero Amadis de Grecia disenchanted the princess Niquea (played by the Infanta), held prisoner by the magician Anaxtarax.[31] The Circe motif was again the subject of Calderon's *El mayor encanto amor,* which he wrote for the theatrical inauguration in 1635 of the lake at the new palace of the Buen Retiro outside Madrid.[32] But perhaps the most explicit confrontation of all occurred during a masque at the English court—the *Alasqtte of qtieenes* (1609). Demonology was not a

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[26] Gramont, *Relation du grand ballet du roy,* 7-8,23—1.

[27] *La Conquete du char de la gloire par le grand Theandre,* in Menestrier, *Ballets anciens et modemes,* 62-4. In this ballet the ghost of Clovis ('Cloridon') describes the transformation of hell itself by Louis XIII (rheandre): 'Par tout oil j'ay porte ce divin charactere | Les Demons adoucis ont mis bas leur colere, | Les damnes ont faict trevc avccque la douleur, | Les Parques n'ont file que des trames de soye, | Et les fourneaux d'Enfcr plcins de flames de joye | N'ont rctenu du feu que la seule couleur. | Theandre e'est ainsi que ton puissant Genie | Comme ennemy qu'il est de toute tyranie | Mesmcs jusques aux morts faict passer son pouvoir.' Cf. McGowan, *Ballet de cour*, 219-20, citing Pierre Lemoyne, *Les triomphes de Louys le Juste en la reduction des Rochelois et des autres rebellesdeson royaume* (Reims, 1629), 182. For other Jesuit festivals in praise of Louis XIII, sec Margaret M. McGowan, 'Les Jesuites a Avignon: Les Fetes au service de la propagande politique et religieuse', in Jacquot and Konigson (cds.), *Fetes de la Renaissance* iii 153-71

" McGowan, *Ballet de cour,* 201-3.

[29] Contemporary account in *Les Platsirs delTsle enchantee. Course de bague. Collation omee de machines. Comedie meslee de danse el de musique, ballet du palais d'Alcine* (Paris, 1664), repr. in *(Euvres de Moliere,* Les Grands Ecrivains de la France (13 vols.; Paris, 1873-1900), iv. 89-268; summary in Menestrier, *Ballets anciens et modemes,* 75-8. Commentary in Alexandre Cioranescu, *L 'Arioste en France: Des origines a la fin du* xvnf slide (2 vols.; Paris, 1939), i. 393-6; R. C. Knight, 'The Orlando Furioso in France, 1660-1669', in Salmons and Moretti (eds.), *Renaissance in Ferrara,* 23,32-39, who shows that, by this time, critical theory was moving away from the taste for the marvellous. On the ordering and consecrating power of the 19? 2OT °F L°U1S XIV'SCC L0U'S MANN' P°R,RAIT °F,H' KING' tranS_Martha Houle (Minneapolis, 1988),

[30] McGowan, *Ballet de cour,* 103-4; Federico Ghisi, 'Un Aspect inedit des intermedes de 1589 a la cour Mediceenne', in Jacquot (ed.) *Fetes de la Renaissance,* i. 152; Menestrier, **Ballets anciens et modernes,** 269-70, and on the Savoy court ballet in general, McGowan, *Ballet de cour.* 238-41.

[31] Ronald E. Surtz, *The Birth of a Theater: Dramatic Convention in the Spanish Theaterfrom Juan Del Encina to Lope De Vega* (Princeton and Madrid, 1979), 123-4.

" Melveena McKendrick, *Theatre in Spain 1490-1700* (Cambridge, 1989), 217-18 (209-37 on court theatre in general).

recurrent idea in the entertainments of the early Stuarts and there was less dependence on the framework of chivalry than in France or, indeed, in Elizabethan pageantry. Even so, Thomas Campion wrote of his masque for the wedding of the Earl of Somerset that he had 'grounded [the] whole invention upon enchantments and several transformations'; in it Queen Anne broke the charms that kept knights imprisoned in pillars of gold.[33] And in 1631 Aurelian Townshend and Inigo Jones devised the Shrovetide masque *Tempe Restored* in direct imitation of the *Balet comique de la royne.* Fifty years on from her defeat by Henri III, Circe (now signifying desire in general) was vanquished again and her enchantments once more dissolved. On this occasion her rivals were that 'matchless pair' Divine Beauty (Henrietta Maria) and Heroic Virtue (Charles I), 'who therein transcends as far common men as they are above beasts, he truly being the prototype to all the kingdoms under his monarchy of religion, justice, and all the virtues joined together'.[34]

The framework of anti-masque/main-masque offered repeated opportunities for depicting rulership as an antidote for all kinds of threats, amongst which (and increasingly after 1603) was enchantment and its metaphors. Associated with the chaotic disorders of the anti-masque, magicians 'provided an opposing force for the monarch's power to overcome'.[35] What happened in the *Masque of queenes* was that Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones used the symbolic example of witchcraft to inaugurate the anti-masque form. The entertainment opens with a sabbat of eleven witches and their 'Dame', its details faithfully taken from advanced demonological opinion (which Jonson cited in a set of annotations to the text). This 'spectacle of strangeness' builds to a menacing climax as the hags work a more and more potent sorcery. They 'boast all the power attributed to witches by the ancients'; again, Jonson cites the canon—Circe, Simatha, Dipsas, Medea, Canidia ... They pronounce their incantations and, finally, resort to what, for masquers, was the most powerful magic of all—the magic of the dance. This is the demonological equivalent of the chivalric process in which heroes were faced by ever more demanding ordeals. And at the height of the sabbat, when it threatens to overwhelm nature itself, the witches, their hell, and the power of their *maleficium* are suddenly negated, not even by the monarch in person but simply by the bruit of his royal reputation (a single blast of 'loud Musique');

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[33] Strong, *Art and Power,* 94; Barbara Howard Traister, *Heavenly Necromancers: The Magician in English Renaissance Drama* (Columbia, Mo., 1984), 151-2,159.

[34] Text in Orgcl and Strong (eds.) *Inigo Jones,* ii. 480-83. Commentary in Erica Vecvers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments* (Cambridge, 1989), 130-3, 193-5, who speaks of the 'visual symbolism of the two great forces, Circe and Divine Beauty, who opposed each other at the beginning and the end of the masque' (130); and Kogan, *Hieroglyphic King,* 149-59, see also 198-9 on the ambiguity of the Circe myth. On the general subject of French influence, and on Townshend's free 'translation' of the *Balet comique,* see McGowan, *Ballet de cour,* 236-8, 241-5. For similar themes, see William d'Avenant's masque of 1634, *The Temple of Love,* also written for Henrietta Maria.

[35] Traistcr, *Heavenly Necromancers,* 158, see also 179 and 151-67 for a survey of magic in the Stuart masques; cf. David Woodman, *White Magic and English Renaissance Drama* (Rutherford, NJ, 1973), 89; Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment,* 210,245,249. For many further examples of magic as the key to masque confrontations between royal power and threats to order, see Douglas Brooks-Davies, *The Mercurian Monarch: Magical Politics from Spenser to Pope* (Manchester, 1983), 85-123.

whereupon ‘the whole face of the scene altered, scarce suffering the memory of such a thing.’ This was superb hyperbole, and a perfect example of masque technique. Given its conventions, the argument about the ability of royal courts to restore order and reason to the world could not have been put more effectively.[36]

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It is in no merely casual sense, then, that rulers brought about the denouements of these entertainments. What they achieved was indeed an untying—the undoing of sorcery, the loosening of magical bonds, the releasing of those entrapped by enchantments.[37] As the prophecy in the *Ballet de Moiiseigneiir le Due de Vandosme* announced of Henri IV: ‘Only the renowned lion | Will break this enchantment.’[38] In this particular story-type, dramatic code became inseparable from conceptual requirement; the needs of theatre were, at one and the same time, the derivations of political theory. They were not fulfilled merely in deference to a kind of formalism, but were exactly satisfied in the actions of a ruler-hero, the very essence of whose power was the ability to destroy evil and restore order. The same was true of the manner in which this was invariably achieved. It was of course intrinsic to court festivals that they should evoke admiration by combining sheer physical magnificence with wonderful technical effects. And the demands of wonder and illusion were, again, perfectly met by the instant dissolutions and miraculous transformations wrought by the numinous powers of kings. Settings involving magic, witchcraft, or demonism were not the only occasion for working out this particular theatrical/political logic but it is plain that no others were as suitable. Hence their popularity with royal patrons and with the artists whose aim it was to glorify their authority. As Claude Francois Menestrier wrote: ‘Gods and enchantments make the fairest devices, because both of them always imply prodigies and supernatural things, which, as far as machines are concerned, are what the marvellous consists of.’[39]

We should not, therefore, underestimate the significance of these early modern entertainments by falling back on the once familiar judgement that they were extravagant, sycophantic, and propagandist. True to a degree, it nevertheless misses the point—which was to celebrate, with appropriate display (and expense), actions and attributes considered so meritorious that they were beyond the reach of even the most elaborate flattery. To say that this was ‘propaganda’ seems a particularly flaccid explanation especially if we allow that it reached few beyond the confines of courts,

[*] Text, with Jonson’s annotations from demonology, in *Ben Jonson* [Works], vii. 278-319. Commentary in Orgcl, *Jonsonian Masque,* 130-46; Parry, *Golden.-lge Restor'd,* 49-57; and see above, Ch. 6. For demonology and disenchantment in other Stuart entertainments and masques, see the fireworks for the weddingofPrincess Elizabeth in 1613,John Nichols(ed.), *The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities, of King James the First* (4 vols.; London, 1828), ii. 530-4, and the anti-masque to *Chloridia* (1631) in Orgcl and Strong (cds.)» *Inigo Jones,* ii. 421.

[”] For the royal denouement in Spanish court drama (though not necessarily in demonic contexts), see Elliott, *Spain and its World,* 170-1.

[M] Lacroix, *Ballets et mascarades,* i. 261.

[”] Menestrier, *Ballets anciens et modemes,* 221-2; see also ibid. 245, where Menestrier draws attention to the literalness of the concept of *deus ex maehina* in court entertainments.

and could, in any case, be receptive to the problems, as well as the achievements of royal government. Such a verdict stems from too literary an analysis of what were essentially political occasions. The festive roles taken by princes were a corollary of the prevailing mystical conception of their office. They were created by some of the greatest artists of the day in order to explore the 'profound mysteries' of a political philosophy. If the divine attributes of rulership coincided exactly with the needs of dramatic form, it was largely because the tournament, the *ballet,* and the masque had developed into natural vehicles for expressing, and even effecting, charismatic authority. Early modern France and Spain were not 'theatre-states' to the same all-embracing degree as nineteenth-century Bali. But Clifford Geertz's stricture concerning the temptation to reduce symbolic political actions to (supposedly) more real ones ought to be borne in mind. In the context of the 'command-and-obedience' model of politics central to Western political theory (he has argued), ritual and ceremony are invariably seen as devices to exaggerate, camouflage, or decorate power; they become instrumental aids to domination. In Balinese political culture, on the other hand, where power was ineffectually pursued and government haphazard, the state was essentially expressive, and spectacle became, accordingly, not a means to an end but an end in itself. It was the ordering force of a political reality in terms of which all manner of aims and ends could be pursued and achieved. This was so because of a prevailing view—Geertz calls it the doctrine of the 'exemplary centre'—which placed the sovereign and the court midway between the supernatural order (of which they were a microcosmic replica) and the orders of men (for which they provided an exemplary pattern).[40]

In the court culture of early modern Europe, nothing is more familiar than this version of political cosmology.[41] That, in these circumstances, the symbolism and the actuality of power might be one and the same thing ought not to disconcert us. It is true that in the European case the centralization and concentration of government were very real objectives, and effective administration was an ever-developing pretension of regimes. But three things in combination ensured the same kind of ordering role for court spectacle. One was the prevalence of versions of authority that located rule in the entourage of the prince or in its ramifications. Another was the substantial lacuna between government intention and practical effect which allowed for the possibility of the ritual fulfilment of policy. And the last was a Neoplatonic conception of the power of art-forms not merely to express but to effect truths—

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[40] Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton, 1980), 13-15, 121-36; cf. id., 'Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought' in id., *Local Knowledge,* 29-30. For Geertz's own excursion into early modern festivals, see his interpretation of Elizabeth's coronation procession and later progresses as symbolic expressions of the charismatic authority emanating from the 'animating centres' of Elizabethan society, in 'Centres, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power', in id., *Local Knowledge,* 121-9.

[41] See, for example, Elliott, *Spain and its World,* 146, and 162-88 (cautioning, nevertheless, against reducing the exercise of power to the manipulation of images). For broadly similar approaches to ceremonial events applied to other than early modern regimes, see Cannadine and Price (eds.), *Rituals of Royalty,* 4-15.

including political truths. It was a commonplace of the period that the prince was a mirror of virtue, that kings were set (as James VI and I put it) ‘upon a publikc stage, in the sight of all the people’;[42] and the sort of stage created for them by the devisers of court entertainments was calculated to enhance both the paradigmatic and the tai—ismanic or hermetic properties of theatre. In these circumstances, Geertz ’s remark ‘that bv the mere act of providing a model, a paragon, a faultless image of civilized existence, the court shapes the world around it into at least a rough approximation of its own excellence’ might be applied as well to *L ’/[venture du Chateau Tenebreux,* the *Ballet de Alonseignetir le Due de Vandosnte,* or the *Masque of queenes* as to the state ceremony of historical Bali.[43]

Many of the festivals we have looked at were entwined with concrete political purposes and all of them expressed values which, however tritely voiced, were thought to be essential to everyday government.[44] Some of them anticipated dynastic or diplomatic achievements, as at Binche and Bayonne; others celebrated accessions, weddings, and investitures pregnant with consequences for personal monarchies (the Avignon *ballet* of 1638 marked the birth of the future Louis XIV). Some were in honour of specific triumphs. The *Ballet de Tancrede* was an allegory of the achievement of the Due de Luyncs in rescuing the adolescent Louis XIII from the control of a Regency dominated by Concino Concini, Marcchai d’Ancre (whose ascendancy and aggrandisement had provoked noble revolt). At Reims in December 1628 the ‘Black Tower’ was La Rochelle, and the enchantment broken by Theandre was the rebelliousness of its defending Huguenot ‘giants’, subdued in October of the same year. Above all, these entertainments dwelt continually on the antithesis between disorder and order, between civil strife and civil peace. For this, the powers of enchanters and enchantresses and the counteracting charms of royal authority provided the perfect symbolisms, but this did not involve any retreat from real issues and aspirations. As Luyncs, the dedicatee of the *livret of* the *Ballet de Tancrede,* was addressed:

> It is you, Sire, who by your worth has courageously disarmed the monsters of wars and seditions which civil discord fetched from hell to impede the righteous designs of Louis the Just.

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[42] James VI and I, *Basilikon doron,* 5, see also 43.

[41] Geertz, *Negara,* 13; cf. for further reflections on ‘the symbolic construction of the state’, id., ‘History and Anthropology’, 329-33. For the festival as paradigm, see Boutier, Dewcrpe, and Nordman, *Un tour de France royal,* 319: *En parlant d’unc rcalitc qu’elle accuse et transforme, la fete produit unc nouvelle realite, instrument de Taction politique. Ce monde d’illusions, oeuvre de la volonte royale ne constitue-t-il pas un ordre modele visible de tous, legitime par le roi, la veritable charpente socio-politique du royaumc?’ The more narrowly talismanic properties of court entertainments are suggested by Orgel and Strong, *Inigo Jones,* i. 1 (‘a kind of mimetic magic’); Frances A. Yates, *Theatre of the World* (London, 1969), 86; ead., *Giordano Bruno,* 176; Jean Jacquot, ‘Joycusect triomphantc entree’, in id. (ed.), *Fetes de la Renaissance,* i. 12; Wilson, *Entertainments,* 9; Greene, ‘Magic and Festivity’, 636-59 (whose distinction between magic as the identity of sign and referent and magic as merely Active breaks down in the cases I have presented). These same properties are challenged by Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power- Political Theatre in the English Renaissance* (London, 1975), 55-8.

[44] See, for example, the political involvement traced in Sara Pearl, ‘Sounding to Present Occasions: Jonson’s masques of 1620-5’, in Lindley (ed.), *The Court Masque,* 60-77.

> In short, it is you, Sire, who by your prudence and success has broken the charms, not of an enchanted forest, but of a whole realm, bewitched by its own adversity.[45]

In the mythographies and emblem-books of the period, witches like Circe and Medea were also bearers of a rich moral symbolism involving the sway of the passions and the force of the irrational. Metamorphosis was readily understood as a metaphor for the transformation which vice could inflict on individual men and women, while demonic storms and tumults referred to the havoc it caused in society. But on this level too, the demonological only served to highlight the re-ordering qualities of virtue and reason that early modem rulers were expected to bring to their office. On this matter the address to Henri III in the *livret* to the *Balet comique* was quite explicit/[6]

What should be admitted is that these were often ceremonial occasions of a more private kind than the great public dramas of Bali. Even so, Spain apart, we should not exaggerate the cultural seclusion of courts. Progresses and entries were, by their nature, highly visible and could communicate the symbolism of mystical politics on a grand scale. The Ferrarese tournament *II tempio d'amore* attracted not merely the aristocracy but the citizens and the populace of the town; even *ballet de cour* was popular with the French bourgeoisie and in the provinces, and not merely with *les grands* of Paris.[47] Louis XIV's *Plaisirs de File Enchantee* was given (over several days) to an audience of six hundred. And in case we should think that only supreme magistrates were the subject of festivals, the *Ballet du Veritable Amour* glorified the qualities of a local governor (and of the local ruling class in general) and was given to an audience of magistrates assembled for the Languedoc Estates. The Stuart masques were particularly esoteric occasions with recondite meanings, but elsewhere intellectual as well as physical accessibility was probably more marked.

Moreover, the impression of a remote cultural elitism can be offset if it is recalled how broad was the popularity of the great poetic epics that provided much of the detailed inspiration for court entertainments on the theme of deliverance and helped to create, in the decades cither side of 1600, a general literary mood favourable to the romantic and the chivalrous. Ariosto, Tasso, and Spenser had an enormous impact in this respect and, in particular, their work ensured the widest dispersal of the motif of the breaking of enchantments.[48] Confrontations with demonic powers of great extent and complexity and their resolution in terms of the counter-magic embodied in supremely virtuous actions were their thematic stock-in-trade. In the first book of the *Faerie Queene,* for example, true rulership, Protestant and imperial, struggles with magic, Catholic and demonic, for control over England and its church. Spenser’s allegory tests the Mosaic authority of Una against the ‘mighty charmes’ of Archimago, in whom are combined the traits of the magicians of Pharaoh, the sorcerer Simon Magus, and the papal Antichrist. ‘Legions of Sprights’ are summoned from hell to possess the mind of the Rcdcross knight and lead him into an infatuation for the witch Duessa. Deliverance is not achieved, in this case, by instantaneous counter-magic but after a long period of redemptive chivalry and a good deal of knightly contrition. But it is achieved in the name of Arthur, and by a strength that is evidently divine. Against his shield:

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[45] Gramont, *Relation du grand ballet du roy,* 3-4; for similar motifs, see Boutier, Dewerpc, and Nordmin, *Un tour de France royal, 33Q.*

[u] Da Belgiojoso (Bcaujoycux), *Ba let comique de la royne,* sigs, aiii^r<; Yates, *French Academies,* ZiO.

[47] Mamczarz, 'Une fete eqüestre a Ferrarc', 352; McGowan, *Ballet de cour,* 229-32 (McGowan speaks ofTengouement general pour le ballet'), 248.

[41] From a huge literature, Cioranescu *L 'Arioste en France,passim',* Henn Hauvette, *L Anoste et lapoeste chevaleretque a Ferrare au debut du XVftiecle,* 2nd cdn. (Paris, 1927), 230-4; J. G. Simpson, Le *Taxe et la littdrature et Fart baroque en France* (Paris, 1962); Brooks-Davies, *Mercurian Monarch,* 11-84.

> No magickc arts hereof had any might,
> Nor bloudie wordes of bold Enchaunters call,
> But all that was not such, as seemd in sight,
> Before that shield did fade, and suddcinc fall:
> And when him list the raskall routes appall,
> Men into stones therewith he could transmew,
> And stones to dust, and dust to nought at all;
> And when him list the prouder lookes subdew,
> He would them gazing blind, or turne to other hew.
>
> (i. vii. 35)

This is a novel variation in the power of the royal gaze; the shield itself blinds Orgoglio (the Giant of Pride) and the Dragon (the Devil) to defeat, and with them Duessa and her enchantments.[49]

* * *

All Renaissance court festivals, whatever their specific theme, had as their eventual object the celebration of rulership; as a genre they drew their inspiration from the contemporary taste for absolutism.[50] They created a theatrical world, both ideal and, in the Platonic sense, real, in which perfect kings and princes were triumphant restorers of the Golden Age. They were, in effect, the visual programme of the political philosophy examined in Chapter 41. For, however we choose to designate the politics of the period in general, it is here (and in the related literature) that we find the clearest expression of charismatic domination. Festivals were more versatile than theoretical treatises and better able to mystify. In progresses and entries, in *ballets* and masques, the depiction of the exceptional piety, wisdom, and heroism of sover-

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” For an analysis of the magical confrontations of bk. I of the *Faerie Queene,* see Brooks-Davies, *Mercurian Monarch,* 11-29, and for comparable episodes in the other bks., ibid. 29-84 (e.g. Britomart and Busyrane in bk. III); cf. James Nohmberg, *The Analogy of'The Faerie Queene* ’(Princeton, 1976), 222-60, which is immensely rich in allusions to the meaning of magic and witchcraft in Spenser Merritt Y. Hughes, ‘Spenser’s Acrasia and the Circe of the Renaissance’, Jl *Hist. Ideas,* 4 (1943), 381-99.

” This is a dominant theme of the studies by Frances Yates, Margaret McGowan, Roy Strong, and Graham Parry. McGowan, *Ballet de cour,* 249, writes: ‘A partir de 1617 la notion de l’Etat s’est confondue dans le ballet avec cellc du Roi.’ The three volumes in the *Fetes de la Renaissance* series (eds. Jean Jacquot and Elie Konigson) all amply illustrate this point, but see esp, Antoinette Huon, ‘Le Thime du prince dans les entrees parisiennes au XVI* siecle’, in Jacquot (ed.), *Fetes de la Renaissance,* i. 21-30.

eigns served to legitimate their authority and (it was hoped) evoke awe in their subjects. The elements of cult were uppermost, and the court masque, in particular, was often enacted in the spirit of a rite. Where chivalry was the particular theme of entertainments, the intimations of charisma are stronger still. Through each year of their reigns princes could prove that their superhuman powers remained active, and they could do so in the most explicit fashion—in public combat. The motif of deliverance likewise conforms well to Weber's ideal-type as the chivalric equivalent of the promise of liberation invariably proffered by charismatic leaders. There is even an element of the sense of crisis which he associated with their original appeal. However anodyne the contests, their very artificiality allowed for maximum escalation towards a critical point where victory became a truly charismatic act. Heroes negotiated ordeals of greater and greater difficulty according to a hierarchy of valour. At Bayonne in 1565 the ordinary knights could scarcely get past the first gate of Bellona's castle; their commanders reached the bridge; only the king penetrated the interior.[51]

Even so, it is the superimposition of demonology on chivalry which turned these occasions truly into affirmations of the charismatic nature of authority. The magicians, witches, and demons from mythology and emblematology were somewhat sanitized versions of those who agitated contemporary witchcraft theorists. But verisimilitude was not what mattered. They were the exactly appropriate symbolic antagonists of those who pretended divine power, since their defeat signalled a superiority which went far beyond the realm of force.[52] Their presence, on so many occasions, alone testifies to the importance of mystical ideas of authority in the period; and the symbolic burden carried by them confirms a built-in (that is to say, conceptual) enmity at work. Far removed by the needs of the imagination and the sensibility of courtiers from the events of contemporary witchcraft prosecutions, the confrontations of the *totirnoi d theme* and the *salle de danse* nevertheless depended on the same set of assumptions as those of the torture chamber and trial room.

In the former cases, as in the latter, it is tempting to talk again of a simpler rivalry which brought two kinds of magical pretension into direct conflict. It has been rightly observed in this connection that the 'courts of rulers have been perceived for time immemorial as centres of magical power and of magicians.'[53] In late Renaissance Europe, it seems, magician monarchs, armed with Mercurian weapons, outvalidated their competitors by casting them as demonic figures and scripting their inevitable defeat, thus leaving the way open for the creation of the ideal polity. This is an idea of which Douglas Brooks-Davies has traced the literary consequences in Spenser, the Stuart masques, and Pope, and which he calls 'an understandable corollary of the theory of divine right'. At the very least, magic provided its own potent symbolism for the exercise of absolute power and the ‘demonologizing’ of all unofficial practitioners was a way of ensuring a symbolic monopoly.[54] In this light, stage magicianship and witchcraft seem to be merely the categories of a political mythology and of the poetry and drama that it generated; deviance, we might say, was choreographed into existence.

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[51] Boutier, Dcwerpe. and Nordman, *Un tour de France royal. 32\.*

[52] Ibid. 323: 'En terrassant les puissances demoniaques qu'incament nains, gcants et esprits, en detruisant les germes de division et d'instabilite, le roi manifeste la puissance sotenologique qui legitime son absolue preeminence L'avancee du pouvoir central a aboli la "Table ronde" el la force guernere des noblL reste desormais aveugle et inefficace tant qu'elle n'est pas soumtsc au pouvo.r monarchtque.

[51] Greene, 'Magic and Festivity', 637.

It is true that, with the liberty of art, court festivals portrayed rulership as a higher magic. In the *Balet comique de la royne* it was clear from both the physical layout and the course of the entertainment that pow'er was being *transferred,* at its close Circe personally handed over her golden wand (the witch’s sceptre) to Henri III.[5S] At Béarn in 1593 Catherine de Bourbon was told that Medea had admitted that her. own knowledge and art had surrendered to royal wisdom and virtue.[56] In 1610 Alcine conceded that the ‘divine and fertile charms’ of Henri IV had overpowered her own.[57] The Jesuit allegory at Reims cast Richelieu as Caspis, the shepherd-assistant to Theandre, calling him not merely ‘stronger than any magic’, but ‘superior *in* magic’.[5"] And of the climax to the 1674 Versailles celebrations marking the conquest ofFranche-Comteit w'assaid: ‘The King... seemed this time to have been served by iMagic itself, so much did the eyes and mind find themselves surprised by the different marvels that charmed them.’[59] Perhaps the two most revealing cases were the appearance of Louis XIII as a good demon (a Platonic *daemon)* at the opening of the *Ballet de la delivrance de Renaud* and the depiction of his Queen as a second Jeanne d’Arc in another Jesuit production, the *ballet-pastoral* which marked her entry into Lyons in 1622.[60] In the spectacles of Elizabethan England too, ‘everything was calculated to enhance [the queen’s] transformation into an almost magical being.’[61] We notice, incidentally, that in the *Faerie Queene* Arthur’s shield is made by Merlin (excelling ‘All living wightes in might of magicke spell’), that Prince Henry has ‘might | And magic’ in his chivalric make-up in *Prince Henry's Barriers* (1610), and that Charles I draws on a ‘secret wisdom’ to quell discord in *Salmacida Spolia* (1640).[62] Even in *Tempe Restored,* it has been suggested, there was an ambiguity in Henrietta Maria’s association with Circe which blurred Platonic and enchanting love and opened the court to moral criticism.[63]

These proximities could only have been risked without intended ambiguity

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” Brooks-Davies, *Mercurian Monarch, passim* (quotation at 1); but cf. Or gel, *Illusion of Power,* 55-7.

[55] A po*nt m:lde by YatCS'/is,raea'165>cf_Da Belgiojoso (Beaujoyeux), *Balet comique de la royne,* fo. 55'. In the Mercurian symbolism, the royal sceptre is the caduceus, the benign version of the magician’s wand; see Brooks-Davies, *Mercurian Monarch,* 1-8.

[54] Lacroix, *Ballets el mascarades,* i. 132.

[57] Ibid. i. 260.

’• Menestrier, *Ballets ancient el modemes,* 63 (my emphasis); McGowan, *Ballet de cour* 219

” Andre Felibien, *Les Divertissements de Versailles donnes par le roy a toute la courau retour de la conquete de la Franche-Comte en l annle 1674* (1674), cited Marin, *Portrait of the King* 204

“ McGowan, *Ballet de cour,* 105,108-9,218-19. In the second case the devisers even allowed a reference to the calumny that had led Jeanne d Arc’s English enemies to accuse her of witchcraft.

[61] Grecnblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning,* 167.

[62] **Spenser, *Faerie Queene,*** II. vii, in Poetical Works, 9o (L [illegible] 26): Orgel and Strong, *Inigo Jones,* i. 160 (11.84-5), ii. 730 (1.13), many similar refs, in Brooks-Davies, *Mercurian Monarch.* 85—123

M Kogan, *Hieroglyphic King.* 198-9.

because a clear hierarchy of value was assumed to separate the workings of sacred from those of profane authority. In the theatre, as in the relevant epic poetry, all the characters availed themselves of preternatural powers, but only some of them in a just cause. In those entertainments that acknowledged a royal magic and made the monarch a political magus, it was *ntagia^ nntgoetia*—the arts of Prospero, not Sycorax—that enabled him to act superhumanly within nature. The Stuart apologists self-consciously drew attention to this distinction; in Ben Jonson's *The Fortunate Isles and their Union* (1625) the efficacious 'macarianism' of James I's monarchy is the subject of the main masque but the entertainment opens by ridiculing the quackery of alchemists and Rosicrucians.[64] In any case, divine rulers had miracle-working properties that allowed them to transcend nature altogether. Often the conceit was that they could change its course or stop the flow of time.[65] Twelfth Night masques were celebrations of Epiphany; in this they pointed not only to the powers of the Magi kings but to the manifestation of divinity itself. In 1617 the audience at the Louvre cried out as if a miracle had occurred; yet it was always intended that the machinery should work with a visionary quality, especially in scenes of transformation. In these circumstances, the power rivalry shown in festivals was often like the competition between natural and demonic magic, but potentially much more like that between the priest and the sorcerer.[66] Important identities were at stake but also vital priorities. And the latter blur the sense in which we can say that demonology was merely a vehicle for political theatre, or that witch figures were created to serve the needs of its myths. Whatever the degree of artificiality or the amount of allegorical layering, their symbolic significance depended on a recognized affinity with their more sinister sisters in the real world. It was the aim of the masque to present royal figures under ideal forms, so that their essential qualities might be appreciated; the same was true of the depiction of their enemies.

* * *

These issues arise yet more urgently in a more concrete setting, largely outside the context of the festival. This is the case of the single most important piece of royal charisma in the period—the ability to heal by touch. Its kinship with magic again seems obvious (and it was obvious to contemporaries); and, as with the power of sight, the close proximity to its maleficent counterpart is especially suggestive. Here, there is no veneer of classical mythology or chivalric romance to camouflage the problem; there was undoubtedly a symbolism attached to healing but monarchs did not heal symbolically. On the morning and afternoon of the day (Corpus Christi, 1565) which ended with Charles IX storming the enchanted castle of Bellona and

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« Orgcl and Strong (cds.), *Inigo Jones,* i. 371-5; cf. Parry *Golden Age Restor'd,* 20-1,46,58,192. Parry speaks of the main masque offering an 'efficacious magic, whose illusions arc images of a higher reality', and of the masque-monarch as 'hermetic magus'.

[61] As, for example, in *Oberon, The Fairy Prince* (1611), in Orgcl and Strong (eds.), /mgo *Jones* i. 209 (11.281-8), and *The Vision of Delight* (1617), ibid. i. 273 (11.193-6).

u See Parry, *Golden Age Restor'd,* 44,62 n. 2: 'A state of mind in which faith can override impossibility was the special creation of the rituals of the masque world, rituals which also have some affinity with the thaumaturgical scenarios evoked by the Jesuits in their churches in Counter-Reformation Italy?

destroying its charms, he was busy touching the scrofulous of Bayonne (and of Spain).[67] At Kenilworth on 18 July 1575, Elizabeth I healed the sick and, in a device by George Gascoige entitled *Princely pleasures,* which marked ‘the beginning of the cult of [her] as a supernatural Being’, she delivered the ‘Lady of the Lake’ from imprisonment on an island surrounded by turbulent water and the forces of a tyrant.[68] How would contemporaries have related these two thaumaturgical roles?[69] We can follow the thinking of at least the intellectuals amongst them by turning to the literature concerned with the royal touch. Again this has implications for the meaning of early modern witchcraft; for in this debate the experts on demonology played an important part.

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[67] Bouticr, Dcwerpe, and Nordman, *Un tour de France royal,* 310-11. He had also done so on the two previous Sundays.

[68] Nichols (ed.), *Progresses of... Queen Elizabeth,* i. 456-9, 498-502; quotation from Wilson, *Entertainments.* 22.

[69] The sense of‘thaumaturgical’ I have in mind is that adopted by Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium.* 24-5; cf. Strong, *Art and Power.* 40,68.

43

Kingcraft and Witchcraft

They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

(Mark 16:8)

The King touches thee, and God heals thee.

(Formula for the royal healing in early modem France; Marc Bloch, *Royal Touch)*

When Fran^oise Secrctain wished to kill certain beasts, she struck them with a wand, saying these words: *1 touch thee to kill thee.'

(Henri Boguct, *Examen of witches)*

THAUMATURGICAL healing is one of the purest expressions of the charismatic propensity and its practice by the monarchs of the West offers a vivid demonstration of its legitimating potential. In performing it, they 'literally acted the part of God'.[1] In this historical instance it was not itself decisive in originating a form of rulership. Rather, it developed as the natural consequence of an already well-established conception of supreme political power as something intrinsically sacred. In 'touching' their subjects for the scrofulous inflammation known as the 'King's Evil', the medieval rulers of France and England were exploring ('exploiting' is perhaps too cynical a term) a view of kingship which was inherited from the seminal political cultures of the Near East and Central Europe, self-consciously patterned on the forms of authority in the Old Testament, and given ritual definition in the ceremonies of royal consecration and unction.[2] But otherwise, the 'royal touch' conforms well to the Weberian ideal-type in its routinized version. Therapeutically it was so exceptional that it was accorded the status of a miracle; it was therefore regarded as a divine gift, albeit located in the office and not the person of the king; it was transmitted in rites (of crowning); and it successfully distanced rulers from ruled at a time when the more ordinary manifestations of power were often unable to achieve this. It was put to the test at regular intervals in the religious calendar, and it was always available as a means for buttressing contingent but doubtful legitimacies, repairing popularity in situations of crisis and restoration, or simply making diplomatic capital. Marc Bloch argued that it developed in response to both the general expectation that sacred kings should work miracles and the circumstantial needs of the Capetians and Plantagenets—plus a pinch of opportunism. But whatever the precise blend of ingredients, royal healing became a vital aspect of‘the environment of marvel which surrounded princes during the last four or five hundred years of the Middle Ages’? Practised in two monarchies, it was nevertheless acknowledged in all. In consequence, Bloch saw it essentially as a key to what he called the ‘moral strength’ of the institution—that is, the sentiments, feelings, and emotions which sustained it as a focus of obligation and loyalty. Certainly, the healing rite developed alongside the more conventionally studied aspects of government and administration, but (Bloch argued) it revealed far more about the meaning of royal authority than any measure of administrative, military, or judicial effectiveness, or, indeed, the bald logic of the political theorists. There was, so to speak, a magical language of politics (‘the “marvellous” element in the monarchical idea’) as well as an instrumental one (the discourse of statecraft); to the historical vocabulary of needs must therefore be added one of beliefs and of mentalities.[4]

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[1] **Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution,* 19. References to this particular case are, nevertheless, disappointing in the literature dealing with charismatic authority; see only Wilson, *Noble Savages,* 109.**

[2] **Bloch, *Royal Touch,* 28-48.1 have relied considerably on his findings throughout this chapter. On the subject generally, see also Rougier, 'Caractire sacrc de la royautc en F rance', in *The Sacral Kingship,* 609-19; Haueter, *Die Kronungen der franzosischen Konige,* 249-60; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 192-204.**

These arguments would be interesting enough even if the royal touch lingered on into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries only as an embarrassing archaism. But this is almost the opposite of what happened. Already enriched by a series of supportive sub-legends, it entered early modern Europe on a high note of vitality, was reinforced by the cult of monarchy associated with the dynastic absolutism of that age, maintained its prestige for nearly two hundred more years, and only began to falter (first in England, then in France) when ‘high’ political culture finally became inimical to supernaturalism—that is, on the eve of, and during the eighteenth century. The Valois and early Bourbon rulers presided over ceremonies of imposing

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’ Bloch, *Royal Touch,* 108; *Stick, Sociology of Religion,* iii. 69, speaks of a ‘world still in thrall to king-magic’.

*** Bloch, *Royal Touch,* 3-5,149. In all this, we are reminded very much of Weber (and of James Frazer too). However, Bloch differs from Weber (and from the approach adopted in what follows) with regard to the issue of authenticity. As I have stressed, Weber argued that it was the sociologist’s interpretative duty to acknowledge the force of a ruler’s charismatic quality ‘regardless of whether this quality is actual, alleged, or presumed’; *From Max Weber,* 295. Instead, Bloch regarded the miraculous healing power of kings as, in Durkheim’s terms, a ‘collective illusion’, and in a final section of his book (pp. 231-43) tried to explain it away in terms of‘a new interpretation acceptable to reason’. In effect, he appealed to the biology of a disease benign enough to disappear of its own accord, and to a measure of psychotherapy. The rest was credulity. Bloch’s thoroughgoing rationalism is evident not merely in his broaching this question at all (why did people go on believing in something which was not in fact real?) but in his depiction of early modern doubts about the royal miracle as ‘the awkward first steps of childhood’. In his view, the naturalists of that age tried but failed to emancipate themselves from a pervading irrationalism. In this, Bloch was evidently influenced more by Lévy-Bruhl (and, indeed, Frazer). Earlier in the work (p. 29) he says ‘the miracle of scrofula is incontestably bound up with a whole psychological system which may on two counts be called “primitive”; first, because it bears the marks of an undeveloped way of thinking still steeped in the irrational; and secondly, because it is found in a particularly pure state in those societies we are agreed to call “primitive”.’ He also cited Lévy-Bruhl in support of the view that the ‘primitive’ mentality is ready ‘to accept as real a miraculous action, even if persistently contradicted by experience’ (p. 414 n. 23). I have preferred to follow Weber in regarding the actual efficacy or inefficacy of the royal touch (its ‘reality’) as an interpretative red herring. While Bloch saw it as a test case for the asking of rationalist questions about all similar behaviour, I regard it as an analogy of a different sort. Like the behaviour associated with the belief in witchcraft, it ought not to be subject to verification.**

splendour in which hundreds, sometimes thousands, of sufferers (including many foreigners) were dealt with. Not merely did royal healing survive the period of religious wars, it was immediately utilized by Henri IV to reaffirm the authority of the Crown and legitimate his own claim to it; administrative reconstruction (Bloch again suggests) was not enough. Across the channel its fortunes were more chequered—good under Elizabeth, Charles I (after 1640),[5] and the later Stuarts but poor when religious scruples outweighed James I's divine-rightism, and then banished the rite altogether from Parliamentary, Interregnum, and Orangist England. Bloch argued that Reformation theology offered the most serious potential threat to royal wonder-working, both because of its rejection of modern miracles and its sensitivity to political idolatry. Even so, Protestant rulers could modify the liturgy, treat their role as supplicatory, and (like James I) carry on. After the Interregnum came a reign in which the royal touch achieved immediate and unprecedented popularity; 100,000 is one estimate of the total of the scrofulous who came before Charles II (one contemporary apologist, with pardonable enthusiasm, thought it was 'near half the Nation').[6] In any case, the doubts of Protestant purists, as well as the scientific sceptism of 'Paduan' naturalists, ran counter to strong currents of royalist theory which (as we have seen) interpreted political authority in very strongly charismatic terms. As Bloch wrote: 'One may well expect miracles of a chief by divine right, whose very power is rooted in a kind of sublime mystery; they will clearly not be expected of an official, however exalted in rank, however indispensable the part he plays in public affairs may seem.'[7] One is left with the impression that, at least between the mid-sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries, the forces of opinion working against the royal healing were largely ineffectual; its general credibility easily outweighed the doubts of individuals. Wrote John Donne: 'none mislikes that the Kings of England and France, should cure one sicknesse by such meanes, nor that the Kings of Spaine should dispossess Daemoniaque persons so.'[8]

Those who moulded opinion in favour of it included, in England, official preachers like John Howson and William Tooker, and physicians like William Clowes and John Browne. In France they numbered several of those we considered at an earlier stage as spokesmen of absolutist and divine-right theories of government, as well as many general panegyricists of monarchy.[9] An especially substantial and influential defence came from the chief court physician to Henri IV, André Du Laurens (Laurentius) of Montpellier. Without exception these apologists continued the medieval tradition of explaining the royal power to heal as an adjunct of charismatic authority.

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[5] Evidence for Charles I's withdrawal from healing before 1640 is given by Judith Richards, ' "His Nowe Majestie" and the English Monarchy: The Kingship of Charles I before 1640', *Past and Present*, 113 (1986), 86-94; see also 94-6 for a plea, similar to mine, for the study of monarchy as much more than the exercise of power.

[6] Browne, *Adenochoiradelogia*, pt. 3, 106.

[7] Bloch, *Royal Touch*, 217; cf. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, [illegible].

[8] John Donne, *Biathanatos: a declaration of that paradoxe, or thesis, that self-homicide is not so naturally sin, that it may never be otherwise* (London, 16[illegible]), 2[illegible]1.

[9] For examples additional to those cited below, see Thuau, *Raison d'Etat*, 21-31.

It derived from a divine gift, freely bestowed on a race of kings (in Weber’s terms, this was ‘lineage’ charisma), which rewarded their exceptional religiosity by granting them the power to perform miracles. Du Laurens, for example, explained that the cures were achieved by ‘some power that lay beyond the ordinary regular course of Nature’, having as its principle ‘the sole and absolute will and extraordinary power of God’. The French kings had been singled out as a channel for this miracle because of their unequalled piety and guardianship of the Catholic Church; and the gift of grace, the charismata, was actually transmitted when they were anointed with holy oil during the ceremony of coronation.[10] Like most other commentators, Du Laurens cited the remarks in a continuation of the *De regimine priiicipum* of Aquinas, attributing them mistakingly to Aquinas himself: ‘The Kings who are the successors of Clovis are anointed with an oil once brought down from Heaven by a dove; and as a result of this unction, diverse signs, prodigies and healings appear in them.”[1]

In Protestant England these were less insistent themes; even so, the royal healing was seen as miraculous. Clowes, who was Elizabeth’s own surgeon, wrote that scrofula was ‘knowne to be miraculously cured and healed, by the sacred hands of the Queenes most Royal Majesty, even by Divine inspiration and the wonderfull worke and power of God, above mans skill, Arte and expectation’. God (he argued) had given ‘divine and peculiar giftes unto Princes’.[12] Eighty years later, another royal surgeon, John Browne, who had witnessed Charles IPs healing, reported that there were those ‘who make this a clear Miracle, with Gods own Finger put into the Healing hands’. That God had created an incurable illness which only his viceregent could cure suggested, at the very least, that it did not come ‘much beneath one’. To disbelieve it was thus equivalent to atheism.[13] At a more popular level, supernaturalism was just as evident. Ordinary people, untouched by theological niceties, regarded the power to cure the disease simply as ‘an intrinsic quality pertaining to the sacred person of the monarch’.[14]

It is difficult to take exception to Bloch’s general principle that this individual piece of thaumaturgy was nourished by ‘a whole magical outlook upon the universe’.[15] But we should ask whether the royal touch nurtured as well as absorbed meanings—whether it generated associations of ideas across this universe of thought. What, in particular, were the implications for the theoretical politics of the witch trials of the presence at the summit of the judicial pyramid of a supreme magistrate who worked wonders using the same gestural language as the witches themselves? Did this identity of means signify as much as the diversity of ends? Was there not, as a result of it, an antipathy between magistracy and witchcraft more highly charged than that which coloured the treatment of other forms of deviance? Certainly the royal touch was readily intelligible within the same intellectual ambit as was witchcraft. Indeed, what is striking about these two subjects is not just their proximity but their overlap.[16] In a very important way demonology enters into both of them and not just into one.

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[10] Du Laurens, *Discours des escrouelles,* 88-9,95,97,120-3; cf. Josuc Barbier, *Les Miraculeux Effects de la saeree mam des rois de France tres-Chrestiens pour la guerison des mala des, et conversion des heretiques* (Paris, 1618), 38-9; Michel Nlauclerc, *De monorchia divina, ecclesiastica et seculari Christiana* (Paris, 1622), cols. 1565-9; Castaldi, *De potestate angelica,* i. 244-6.

" .details in Bloch, *Royal Touch,* 75-7, 321 n. 89; Bloch attributes the continuation to an Italian Dominican, Fra Tolomeo, Bishop ofTorcello. Cf. Du Laurens, *Discours des escrouelles,* 91.

” William Clowes, *A right frutefull and approved treatise, for the artificiall cure of that malady called in Latin struma, and in English, the evill* (London, 1602), 'Epistle to the reader’, sig. kiii’. This was the idea that James I could not accept, but his continued practice of the rite, together with the depiction of his monarchy in processional and masque settings, must still have created the impression of a thaumaturgical rulership at work. For the tensions and ambiguities in English attitudes to the royal healing, as well as details of Elizabeth’s performance of the ceremony, see Deborah Willis, ‘The Monarchy and the Sacred: Shakespeare and the Ceremony for the Healing of the King’s Evil’, in Linda Woodbridge and Edward Berry (cds.), *True Rites and Maimed Rites: Ritual and Anti-Ritual in Shakespeare and his Age* (Urbana and Chicago, 1992), 147-68.

” Browne, *Adenochoiradelogia,* pt. 3,71-2,110-11,

[14] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 194-5. For other contemporary English comments, see Boorde, *Breviary ofhelthe,* fos. Ixxxxiii’-lxxxxvi’.

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In the first place, there is no doubt that the royal healing was thought of in exorcistic categories. The text which offered the best biblical support for it[17]—Mark, 16:17-18—was also considered to be fundamental for any defence of the power to expel demons, and it was always uttered as part of the formal ritual of exorcism: ‘And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues ... they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.’ Of course, this statement reflected Christ’s own frequent thaumaturgical practice in blending exorcisms and healings as almost undifferentiated miracles. But it also indicated a blending of roles in those with the subsequent power to perform them. Its continued citation in connection with the royal touch was in itself suggestive of a sacerdotal dimension in monarchy which could easily embrace other sorts of priestly performances. This explains why Browne, for example, located the royal touch in a tradition of charismatic power reaching back to Christ and the apostles, whose healing miracles were like their ‘other Divine Qualifications, of Prophesying, casting out Devils, and the like’.[18]

Fundamental to charismatic kingship, royal sacerdotalism had long been challenged by churchmen, but even their hostility is instructive. Medieval critics, for example, adopted the Gregorian view that only priests, possessed of a spiritual ‘empire’, could properly expel demons—an allusion to the fact that in healing the sick, the imperial kings of France and England were doing something very similar.[19] In the sixteenth century too, English Protestant opponents of the allied practice of blessing and distributing ‘cramp rings’ (subsequently used against sickness) saw it as, essentially, a form of exorcism, and this particular element of royal thaumaturgy was abandoned after 1558. Yet, despite several modifications between the reigns of Henry VII and Queen Anne, every version of the liturgy for the royal healing ceremony itself retained readings of the two gospels traditionally associated with exorcizing—that is, Mark, 16: 17-18, and John, 1: 1-5.[20] The eighteenth-century surgeon and antiquarian William Becket actually' suggested that the office used by Henry VII had been borrowed from a formula for exorcism later found in the *Thesaurus exorcisuiorum atqtie coniuratioiitim terribiliumP* (Before leaving the text in Mark, 16, we should also notice the themes of immunity and inviolability; in the same verses Christ adds, 'They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.' Kings did not, after all, catch the highly infectious *struma* that was scrofula; just as exorcists were invulnerable to demonism and magistrates to the arts of witchcraft.)

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[15] Bloch, *Royal Touch*, 216.

[16] In the light of the corrections to Bloch made by Frank Barlow (who dates the institutionalization of the royal touch in France and England to the mid-13th c.), the two also had parallel histories; see Barlow, ‘The King’s Evil’, *English Hist. Rev.* 95 (1980), 3-27.

[17] Bignon, *De l'excellence des roys*, 519—20.

[18] Browne, *Adenochoiradelogia*, pt. 3, sig. Cc3ʳ, cf. 7, 64–9.

[19] M , *Royal Touch*, 69–84 (esp. 71), 316 n. 66. ws-zsicr. Stark, *Sociology of Religion*, iii. 60–173, who concentrates on arguments for and against ‘caesaropapism’ in medieval and early modern Europe.

Several French writers of the early modern period drew parallels between the healing of scrofula and the powers of the Merovingian king, Guntram, who reputedly expelled demons from demoniacs with a touch of his cloak. It was usual to cite Gregory of Tours, who had written of Guntram: 'I myself have often seen demons who inhabit the bodies of those possessed cry out the name of this king, and, being unmasked by the virtue proceeding from him, confess their crimes.'[21] [22] Especially telling was the reputation of St Marcoul himself, the patron saint of the royal power to heal scrofula, as an exorcist. He was said to have visited another Merovingian, Childebert I, 'who knew him by the howling of the possessed, whom he delivered from the devil in his presence and at his entreaty'.[23] The medieval kings of Castile were also said to have been able to cast out devils by making the sign of the cross and calling on God,[24] while the distribution of the cramp rings by the English monarchy was associated with the driving away of diseases (like epilepsy) considered to be of diabolical origin.[25]

One French writer, Antoine de Morry, compared the royal power to heal with the

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[20] Details in R. Crawfurd, *The King's Evil* (Oxford, 1911), 53, 61,72, 89, 115,147; further liturgical history in George MacDonald Ross, 'The Royal Touch and the Book of Common Prayer', *Notes and* jQuerid, 228 (1983), 433-5.

[21] Crawfurd, *King's Evil,* 56-7.

[22] Cited Bloch, *Royal Touch,* 16 (the reference to Gregory of Tours is to *Historia Francorum,* bk. 9, ch. 21); cf. Bignon, *De I'excellence des roys,* 521; Simon Faroul, *De la dignité des roys de France, et du privilège que Dieu leur a donné de guarir les escrouelles* (Paris, 1633),27.

[21] Oudard Bourgeois, *Apologiepourlepelerinagede nos roys a Corbeny au tombeau de S. Marcoul* (Reims, 1638), 3.

[24] Du Laurens, *Discours des escrouelles,* 93; Faroul, *De la dignité des roys de France,* 25-6; Donne, *Biathanatos,* 217; Stark, *Sociology of Religion,iii.* 129-31. For a defence, see Juan Lazaro Gutiérrez, *Opusculum defascino* (Lyons, 1653), 154-6. The kings of Spain were not endowed with healing powers in early modem Europe, nor did they have the public sanction of a coronation ceremony; on the latter, see Tedfilo F. Ruiz, 'Unsacred Monarchy: The Kings of Castile in the Late Middle Ages', in Wilentz (cd.), *Rites of Power,* 109-44. Stark links this to the dominant strain in Iberian-Catholic political theology that saw the king as a servant of the community with divinely imposed duties, rather than as a representative of God within the community, endowed with divinely granted rights; see *Sociology of Religion,* iii. 126-73, esp. 139–51.

[21] Bloch, *Royal Touch,* 95,105-6. Bloch cites a blessing from the relevant liturgy in the private missal of Mary Tudor 'O God,... vouchsafe to bless and sanctify these rings so that those who wear them may

spectacular dispossessions achieved by French archbishops and bishops at Laon in 1566 and Soissons in 1582: ‘Just as this miracle continues in our Kings, so also, in our Bishops, does the power to drive out devils, which was given to them by the Son of God and has descended from the Apostles through successive Bishops by their consecrating and anointing.’[26] This is an especially revealing juxtaposition because it suggests the interpenetration of two categories of charismatic authority. But there are even quite detailed parallels to be seen between the forms of piety found in the royal healings and the priestly exorcisms of Counter-Reformation Europe. Just as the Host was the central sacramental weapon of the exorcists, being repeatedly fed to and laid on demoniacs and invariably accredited with the actual driving away of demons, so the French king healed immediately following mass (taken in both kinds as another signal of sacrcdness), when, it was said, ‘the full fervour of the Eucharist was upon him’ and he was ‘armed and fortified with the Heavenly wafer’.[27] Just as holy relics too were often placed on the writhing bodies of the demoniacs to quell the powers of the demons that inhabited them, so the arm of the medieval French King St Louis (preserved at Poblct in Catalonia) was believed in the sixteenth century to be still capable of curing the scrofulous when they were touched by it. As Pierre de Lancre boasted, French kings cured even when they were dead.[28]

We have already seen the general appropriateness of exorcism as a symbol of magistracy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the concepts of supreme political authority implied by the healing rile could be expressed in terms of the same symbolism. Scrofula was, after all, ‘the King’s Evil’ *(le mal roi).* The ceremony of coronation which conferred the ability to cure it involved anointing on the head to signify royal authority, on the shoulders to signify the burdens of state, and on the breast to signify affection for the people. In line with this symbolic language was the significance of anointing the royal hands—to suggest not only the ability to heal individuals but the power to drive away evil from (and so ‘heal’) the entire commonwealth.[29] An example of the way this particular association of ideas was developed is the tract on royal healing published by the former Huguenot pastor and born-again Catholic, Josue Barbier. He begins by discussing the miraculous cures of Christ and says that the Apostles too

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be protected from the snares of Satan ... and may be preserved from all nervous spasms and the perils of epilepsy.’ He also adds a passage from the opening prayers which succinctly expresses the charismatic conception of (Tudor) monarchy: ‘Almighty and Eternal God... who hast vouchsafed to pour upon those whom Thou hast raised up to the heights of royal dignity the adornment of singular graces, and hast made them instruments and channels of Thy gifts, so that even as they reign and rule by Thy power, so also by Thy will they are serviceable to others and transmit Thy benefits to their peoples...

[24] Morry, *Discours dun miracle,* 24.

[27] Du Laurens, *Discours des escrouelles,* 89.

[21] De Lancre, *L'Incredulite,* 167; Jacques Valdes[ius], *De dignitale regum regnorumque Hupamae* (Granada, 1602), 140. Consonant with this were the healing powers associated with the relics of Charles I; see Bloch, *Royal Touch,* 210; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 193-1.

[29] Morn’, *Discours d'un miracle,* 20-2; Jean d’Artis, *Harangue et tres humble remonstrance au rot pour I'universite de Paris* (Paris, 1621), 3-4; cf. Faroul, *De la dignite des rays de France,* 16-17, who speaks of anointing, ‘pour guarir les maladcs ... et pour vaincrc et terrasscr les cnnemis de 1 Eghse (Faroul also extended this metaphorical healing to the royal fleur-de-lis: ‘Ces lys sacrez enseignent aussi i nos Roys, que comme le lys, et I’huvie meslangez ensemble, guarissent les ulccres, ils doivcnt perpetuelle yeiller i la same du corps mystique de l’Eglise, bannir de leur Royaumc l’heresie, et toute fausse doctrine, 21). For

were sent out into the world with the same intention to fight against hell and its devils'; hence the attempts by the early magicians to buy what they could not achieve by the power of their demonic arts—the efficacy of the miracle.[30] In early seventeenth-century France there was a greater need than ever for those possessed of thaumaturgical powers to confront the prodigious demonism that threatened to engulf society in the form of Protestant heresy and the impending reign of the Antichrist (Barbier illustrates again the apocalypticism of the period; his eschatology at this point is typically Pauline and Johannine.) Of the agencies of thaumaturgy, the charismatic kingship of Louis XIII (combining the piety of St Louis, the wisdom of Solomon, the constancy of Constantine, and the justice of Justinian) is paramount. His physical cures—Barbier had just witnessed the healing of 1,500 sufferers at St Germain-en-Laye—would, in effect, secure the spiritual recovery of the Huguenots. Like Moses and Clovis before him, Louis would convert or recover a whole kingdom by the exercise of charismatic authority in wonders, and by virtue of his privileged immunity (the result of unction) from those wrought by the artifice of Satan. Barbier concluded:

> The devil who troubled Saul was subdued by the sound of the harp plucked by the sacred fingers of David. But how many devils are today Hell-bound and without power in this Kingdom, through the wonderful properties which God has placed in the right hand and the fingers of our Most Christian King?”

This was a reference to a text (1 Samuel, 16) that was also employed by the devisers of exorcisms.[32] Barbier finished his tract with an attack on Huguenot political theory, including a version of the doctrine of resistance which he condemned as contrary to Romans 13.[33] And to complete the familiar circle of allusions he described heresy (naming Calvin, Beza, and Du Moulin) as a ‘Circe’ whose charms had proved (necessarily) to be inefficacious against the French throne.[34]

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This categorization of royal healing as an exorcistical or quasi-exorcistical action created one intellectual thoroughfare between widely held and influential notions about power and authority and the thought-system of the witchcraft theorists. But there was a second route which, in many ways, is more revealing of the conceptual affinities and interactions involved. For, patently, kings were not the only healers who claimed to cure by touch and the invocation of a form of words; nor was healing the only kind of efficacy which could result from such actions.[35] Above all, there were those who were thought to harm by the same means, including, of course, witches. Accordingly, we find the theorists of royal authority and the theorists of witchcraft

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details of the rite, see Jean Du Tillet, *Les Alemoires et recherches de Jean* 149-51;
Du Chesne, *Antiquitez et recherches,* 27-8; Theodore Godefroy, *Le*
658-9; commentary in Jackson, *Vive le Roi!,* 20,29,141;
159-61.

entering, from their different directions, the same debate—a debate about how to distinguish the cases regarded as authentically monarchical, miraculous, and beneficial from those regarded as false, spurious, and maleficent. Moreover, this was a debate conducted wholly in a demonological idiom.

On the one hand, the apologists of royal healing denounced the cures of the folk practitioners, and even disapproved-of rulers, as the product of secret collusion with devils, while at the same time defending royal thaumaturgy from precisely the same accusation, made by Protestant zealots and other sceptics. Clowes, for instance, complained of'the Illusions of certaine Charmes of Clowtes and Rags' in popular cures for the *struma*, while his fellow Elizabethan Tooker was careful to distinguish the royal miracle from the false versions of demons.[36] Browne was evidently worried that Charles II's success might be attributed to the 'Invocation of evil Spirits, or Inchantment', since there were so many 'pretended Curers' in the world whose 'fallacies and cheats' worked by witchcraft. The king, he insisted, used no 'ill or black methods'.[37] Du Laurens thought that the claims of local healers and charmers to exercise a natural ability to cure (through tribal or blood-relationships) were fabulous, fraudulent, or derived from a demonic pact. The fact that many of them were distinguished by bodily marks was proof of this, as was their belief in the intrinsic power of formulaic utterances. Like any witchcraft theorist, Du Laurens wrote that 'the words of themselves have no force or ability to act, but... by them, as if by certain signs and indicators, the devils are drawn and compelled to act, on account of the agreement they have made with men.'[38] But he also resorted to the same explanation in the cases of three kingly competitors, the emperors Vespasian and Adrian, and Pyrrhus, King of Epirus. Louis Roland, head of the Collège de Justice in the University of Paris took an even more purist line, dismissing all examples of royal healing other than those in France as 'nothing but [the work of] evil Spirits'.[39]

What was it that distinguished the French kings' practice—more or less identical in form—from these disavowed versions? Why were Henri IV and Louis XIII not witches? However implausible this question may sound, it was the one to which men like Du Laurens were driven, largely by the force of their own arguments.[40] It is already implicit in Anthoine de Morry's *Discours dun miracle avenu en la basse Normandie* (1598), which is largely an attempt to distinguish true miracles from demonic copies and which includes the royal touch as, so to speak, raw data for this distinction—along with natural wonders from the New World, visions, dreams and

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Ury bills with his sceptre in order to turn them into laws; see James Howell, *The instruments of a king: or, a short discourse of the sword, the scepter, the crowne* (London, 1648), 3.

[M] Clowes, *Right frutefull and approved treatise,* sig. Dii'; William Tooker, *Charisma, sive donum sanationis* (London, 1597), 70-9. For accusations of magic and witchcraft against folk healers by touch, see *Thomis, Religion and the Decline of Magic, 200-4.*

[17] Browne, *Adenochoiradelogia,* pt. 3,30-1,54-7,118, see also 102,125.

[11] Du Laurens, *Discours des escrouelles,* 107-8, see also 96-9,104.

” *Roland, De la dignite du roy, 25.* • *ji* •JI /IAW

[40] In addition to the following examples, see Arroy Bcsian, *Questions decides (\634),* cited by Thuau, *Raison d'Élal,* 29.

prodigies, metamorphosis, and witches' sabbats. It should, perhaps, be added that Worry was not remote from the intellectual climate of the court; he was in fact a royal councillor and almoner and in the second capacity would even have participated in the healing ceremonies of Henri IV. But it was the king's physician, Du Laurens, who confronted the issue most openly. The aim of his *De mirabili strumas sanandi vi solis Galliae regibus christianissimis divinitus concessa* was to pare away all explanations for the power to heal by touch other than that it was in origin a pure charism, entirely miraculous in its workings and granted to French kings as a sign of God's special regard for them and their subjects. This eliminated some causes which were necessary but not sufficient (the office of kingship itself), some which were genuine but not relevant (the strange effects of contiguity in nature and the powers of the imagination), and others which were merely specious (the supposed intrinsic efficacy of touch and of words). Du Laurens ended up with a stark alternative: the cures worked either because they came from God or because they came from the devil.

It is no surprise to read in what followed that, although magicians and witches appeared to wield supernatural powers to cure illness, they were in fact either working with natural causes known to a virtually omniscient devil, or peddling illusions. Demonic cures were not above nature but merely against its ordinary processes; they were in effect enticements to belief in witchcraft and so could scarcely buttress the authority of divine kings. What is noteworthy is the apparently quite natural home which these commonplaces of early modern demonology found in a book which, in the widest and truest sense, was a work about politics.[41] Du Laurens ends up by placing the healing powers of kings and devils side by side for inspection, and they turn out to be contrasting metaphors of the political process: 'whereas in the works of God everything is well regulated and ordered, and there is excellent agreement and accord between them, diabolical works are without order, full of confusion, illusions, and deceits.'[42] Kings cured (and ruled?) completely and genuinely, precisely because they could transcend the ordinary course of nature (and of public affairs?); demonic remedies were partial, fraudulent, and (ultimately) bound by what was normal. But the very fact that Du Laurens conducts this comparison at all recalls us to 'the "marvellous" element in the monarchical idea'. The actions of kings were in appearance sufficiently like those of magicians and witches to need the defence that they were not demonically inspired—another version of the phenomenon which Weber called 'contested charisma'. This very proximity brought demonology into yet closer intellectual contact with the central issues of political theory in the 'absolutist' mode.

But if apologists of 'the healing benediction' talked on occasion like the writers of demonology, so too the theorists of magic and witchcraft—the 'demonologists' proper—had to pay attention to thaumaturgy in kings, and enter the same debate about its origin and authenticity. In some cases, religious partisanship led Catholics among them only to the same aspersions regarding the demonic source of the powers of Protestant rulers. Del Rio, for example, accused Elizabeth of fraud or (in effect) witchcraft, her cures either did not work, or they worked because natural means were intruded, or they derived from demonic collusion ('from either a tacit or an express pact with the demon').[41] * [43] Conversely, Niels Hemmingsen condemned the English cramp rings and the French royal healings as the sport of devils, left over from an age of Catholic idolatry.[44] National rivalry too could play its part, allowing Martin de Castanega to cast doubt on the authenticity of royal healing in France by saying, amongst other things, that it was empirically indistinguishable from its demonic equivalent.[45] But for the most part it was an intellectual dilemma, rather than a sectarian or national affront, that was faced by many demonological authors. They too had to account for the existence in rulers of a real power to heal by touch, having cast doubt on the supposed causal efficacy required by the idea of the power of touch in all *other* cases—that is, excepting those of contagious illnesses and secret sympathies and antipathies in nature, like magnetism. Virtually in one breath, Jean Jacques Boissard attributed the thaumaturgy of the Italian 'salvatori' (and their supposed immunity from the bites of rabid dogs and the stings of serpents) to the devil's cunning, yet acknowledged that each year countless numbers were freed from scrofula by a 'marvellous gift' in the kings of France. Once again, then, kingcraft had to be distinguished from witchcraft.[46]

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[41] I am deliberately echoing Bloch's own description of his own book as 'a contribution to the political history of Europe, in the widest and truest sense of those words' (p. 5). Du Laurens's demonological chapter (ch. 9) is at 115-19.

[42] Du Laurens, *Discours des escrouelles,* 119.

The most substantial attempt to achieve this was made by Pierre de Lancre in a chapter entitled 'De l'attouchement' in his *L'Incredulite et ntescreance du sortilege plainement convaincue* (1622). Like all witchcraft writers, de Lancre argued the scientific case that there could be no intrinsic power to harm in the mere act of touching; to deny this would be to accept the claims of magicians. Touch might occasion the transmission of contagious disease or convey natural antipathies. But this was not to endow the gesture itself with any efficacy; nor were such effects the relevant ones in cases of witchcraft, where neither infection nor natural enmity was the issue. Since healing by touch must, in principle, be subject to identical strictures, de Lancre arrived at the same position as Du Laurens. Whatever actually resulted from any form of touching that was not to be accredited to nature was achieved by God or, in most cases, the devil acting directly on the recipient. All examples of *maleficium* by this means were patently of demonic origin; de Lancre explained that:

> **the charm or sorcery that brings some harm or some *maleficium* by touch cannot be natural, either by the artifice or the natural power in the hands of the witch; it results rather from the maleficent property in an evil demon, with whom the witch who brings the harm by her touch**

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[41] Del Rio, *Disquisitionum magicarum,* 14; cf. Castaldi, *Depotestate angelica,* i. 243-4.

[44] Hemmingsen, *Admonitio,* sigs. M2'-M3'. [41] Castaftega, *Tratado,* 309.

[44] Boissard *Tractatus posthumus,* 86. For other discussions of the royal touch tn the context of magic, demonology, or witchcraft, see Caspar ?wer, *Commentary de pw*^^^ *s divinationum generibus* (Frankfurt/Main, 1593), 315 (not in edn. of 1553); Vairo, *Defascino,* 48; Torreb anca *Daemonologia* 380-1; Giuntini,5^rrw/«maj/ro/ogw^fos.46\48'-9;Andr^Libavius, TrtfrM/w^«oMynn(Fnmkfurt/Main, 1594) 37-8* Pietro Passi, *Della magic arte, overo della magia naturale* (Venice, 1614), 59-63, Frommann, *actatus* 7?*de fascinatione,* 475-8; Scot, *Discoverie,* 303-4; Baxter, *Certainty,* 212-13. Boguet, *Examen of witches,* 125, sec also 102, conceded that 'witches' (popular healers?) healed scrofula.

has an express or tacit agreement, or it comes from the wicked potions and secret powders which this demon gives her to bring about these evil effects.[47]

Healing by touch was made a more complex matter by de Lancrc’s prejudices as a Frenchman and a Catholic. The genuine gift of healing in this way was a divine charism, ‘a supernatural gift, and a favour given freely by God’.[47] [48] De Lancre recognized it in Edward the Confessor (but not his successors), in seventh sons, in the Catholic saints, and in the kings of France; all other instances he consigned to the fraudulent or the demonic. As for the monarchs, he follow’ed Du Laurens in saying that it was not regality alone but religiosity too that warranted their sanative claims. They healed only after sacred anointing had made them vehicles for the pow'er of miracle.

Reflected here arc the two main themes that emerge from the history of the royal touch and its literature in their early modern phase. One of them is obviously the expression of the divinity and sacrosanctity of monarchy and of all forms of authority’ for which monarchy was regarded as the model or source. Jérôme Bignon and John Browne alike claimed that there was nothing that approached nearer to the divine than the power to heal an illness which was largely intractable to human remedies. As Raymond Crawfurd remarked, the very performance of the healing rite asserted a political philosophy—that the king was king by the grace of God and not by the will of his subjects.[49] Du Laurens asserted simply that political individuals were singled out in this way, ‘that they may acquire authority’; Faroul spoke of ‘God having allowed them this privilege that they may be recognized as the leaders and rulers of their peoples’.[50]

The second theme concerns the element of proximity to magic. Marc Bloch thought that, as a method of transmitting forces between individuals, touching was one of the most ancient of magical gestures. For Keith Thomas also, the royal power to heal was a ‘primitive piece of magic’ camouflaged by religious ceremonies and the rationalizations of theologians.[51] ‘To that soft Charm, that Spell, that Magick Bough, That high Enchantment’, wrote the clergyman poet Robert Herrick of the royal cure, ‘I betake me now.’[52] For all the huge disparity in moral value, kingcraft and witchcraft displayed, in this instance, certainly a gestural, but also a conceptual affinity. Armed with the categories of Weber and the findings of political anthropologists, we are apt to stress the similarities and treat the differences as a matter of cultural taste. But we have seen that contemporaries too realized that the actions of kings and witches could be sufficiently cognate for them *both* to be suspected of demonism. In seventeenth-century England it was reported as a popular belief that scrofula was called the ‘King’s Evil’ because the king caused, rather than cured it.[53] Towards the end of the century the possibility of direct parallels between the powers of kings and the powers of charmers was openly admitted. As Bloch reminds us, it was not long before Montesquieu could remark of Louis XIV: 'This king is a great magician.'[54] But even earlier critics were always likely to view royal healing as no better than conjuration. The liturgists themselves were evidently aware of this. In the Marian ceremony of the cramp rings there is a rather revealing prayer asking that 'all superstition may be far removed, and all suspicions of diabolical deception'.[55]

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[47] De Lancrc, *L’lncreduliH,* 176. [4‘] Ibid. 157.

[44] Bignon, *De Texcellence det royt,* 518; Browne, *Adenochoiradelogia,* pt. 3,71-2; Crawfurd, *King's Evil,* 105; cf. Roland, *De la dignite du roy,* 24. Bloch, *Royal Touch,* 191, speaks of the rite as *a perfect expression of the superhuman character of monarchical power’.

[M] Du Laurens, *Ditcoun det etcrouellet,* 120; Faroul, *De la dignitddet royt de France,* 25.

[”] Bloch, *Royal Touch,* 52; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 197.

[“] Herrick, ‘To the King, To cure the Evi 11’, from *Hetperidet* (1648), in *The Complete Poetrv of Robert Herrick,* cd. J. Max Patrick (New York, 1963), 90.

[”] Capp, *Atlrology and the Popular Preu,* 212.

Both themes are evident in de Lancre's dissertation on the powers of touch. His own judicial mission against the witches of Labourd had been sanctioned administrate civ by royal letters patent from Henri IV. However, de Lancre also recognized a marvellous element in those ideas of rulership that provided the intellectual inspiration of his magistracy in the French south-west. His *Tableau de Tinconstance des mauvais anges el demons* had celebrated authority in action against witches; the later volume acknowledged the source of that authority in a sacred dispensation and its illustration in wonder-working powers. Yet even de Lancre was conscious of the parallels to be drawn between the witchcraft he hated and the thaumaturgy he admired—conscious, as it were, of a symmetry between the negative and the positive images of power. Bringing his discussion to a close is a remark that perfectly encapsulates both the sense of contrariety and the sense of identity we have been exploring. De Lancre has been iterating the principle that *maleficium* by touch proceeds not from the physical contact itself but from the intervention of demonic agency:

> **so that whereas in the touching of scrofula by the consecrated hand of our Kings, it is said 'the King toucheth thee, and God healeth thee', they [the witches] might say on the contrary 'the Witch toucheth thee, but the Devil afflicts thee *(teJlestrit)'*[56]**

Faced with such a statement it is tempting to set de Lancre deconstructively against himself.

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[54] Bloch, *Royal Touch,* 28-9; cf. the remark cited by Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 177: 'If this principle of believing nothing whereof we do not see a cause were admitted, we may come to doubt whether the curing of the King's Evil by the touch of a monarch may not be likewise called charming'; from Sir George Mackenzie, *Pleadings in Some Remarkable Cases (1672).*

[55] Bloch, *Royal Touch,* 106.

[56] De Lancre, *L 'Incredulite,* 176. On the motif of central kingly power in *Tableau de I inconstance des mauvais anges et demons,* see Jacques-Chaquin, 'La Sorccllerie et ses discours', 19, and on de Lancre's concept of magistracy, cad. (cd.), *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et démons* (Paris, 1982), 12-15.The only early modern French king to be denied the ability to heal was also accused of diabolism—by thesame enemies. Henri III was said to be unable to cure scrofula because at his coronation the ampoule of ho'y oil 'ne se trouva point disposée en son ordinaire': see Cameron, *Henri III,* 22 (ating La *Vuet faits notable, de Henry de Valois,* 37-9). For the charge that he practised magic and even witchcraft, and its effects on the imagery of royal power, see ibid. 25-7, 122-33, and also the Catholic anti-Valo.s pamphlets of 1589 ated by F\J.Baumgartner, *Radical Reactionaries: The Political Thought of the French Cathohc League*-(Geneva, 1975), 106-7, and listed in Rudolf Schcnda, 'Französische Prodigienschnften aus der:zweittn Halftc: des 16 Jahrhunderts' *ZeitschrififurfranzdsischeSpracheundLiteratur,69(l959),l6l-2.Cf.McGovnn,* 'Les ImagesduⁿX'iXaUu teips de Henri III' 311-12; Yates, ^^99^6^ Yardeni 'Henri III Sorcier', in Robert Sauzet (ed.), *Henn III et son temps* (Pans, 1992,57-66. The authenticity of these Leaguer accusations is not,ofcourse,the issue. It« rather, thepossibd.tyofanassociation of ideas linking impotence to heal with diabolic contamination. Bloch deals with the case, *Royal Touch,* 193.

44

Bodin's Political Demonology

> And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel.
>
> (Numbers 25:4)

> Neither can there be any thing fairer to behold, more delightfull to the mind, or more commodious for use, than is order itselfc.
>
> (Jean Bodin, *Six bookes of a commonweale)*

ONE way of illustrating the affinities that have been the subject of this last group of chapters would be to pay attention to those authors who published significant contributions to the literature of witchcraft and also made public pronouncements about the nature of politics. This is not a question of expecting all advocates of witch trials to have given equally ardent support to the notion of monarchy by divine right. This book has been about the way they talked in several different languages and inflections. All of these were 'political', in the general sense that expressions of orthodoxy are necessarily political, but not all of them were associated with declarations of ideological allegiance. In any case, the impulses to hold (or doubt) orthodox witchcraft beliefs could be strong enough to override a political philosophy pushing in a different direction. The Calvinist theologian and pastor Lambert Daneau matched his dialogue on witchcraft with a study of Christian politics in which he appealed to the godly magistrate to suppress all heresy and idolatry; but later in the same work he allowed for rulers who violated the fundamental laws of their kingdoms to be deposed on the grounds that they were 'vassals' of the commonwealth.[1] Likewise, one of the leading supporters of witchcraft prosecutions in Bavaria, Adam Contzen, saw them in terms of the establishment of a centralized, non-contractual Catholic state, but his absolutism lacked the theocratic elements found in Horn or Bossuet? Conversely, the most insistent champion of patriarchal absolutism in mid-seventeenth-century England, Sir Robert Filmer, seems to have started out with witchcraft ideas to match, but became sceptical about the reality of the demonic pact at a time—the 1640s—when attacking it meant that other forms of the contractualism he hated, including Calvinist covenant theory, could also be thrown into doubt?

[1] Lambert Daneau, *Politic" Christianae* (Geneva, 1596), 361-473, esp. 457-60, and. on the contractual nature of rulership, 41,448.

[2] Behringer, *Hexcnverfolgung,* 234, 249-50; Bireley, *Counter-Reformation Prince,* 141-2- Ernst-Albert Seils, *Die Staatslehre desjesuiten Adam Contzen, Beichvater Kurjiint Maximilian I von Ravrm* (Lübeck, 1968), 180-1.

[3] This change of heart and its Civil War context are thoroughly explored by Bostridge, 'Debates

The instructive cases, then, would be of those whose interest in demonology was strongly tinged by particular political interests and who matched this with a definite commitment to mystical politics. Of these, the example of King James VI of Scotland is one of the clearest.[4] Another is that of the lawyer Pierre Grégoire, whose *De republica* included a substantial section given over to demonology—a striking illustration of standard witchcraft theory finding its natural place in a treatise on government. W. r. Church writes that of the immediate followers of Bodin, Grégoire 'outlined the most complete theory of divine right'; amongst his arguments was that 'since the king was no less than the actively inspired agent of the Deity, the people had no choice but to give reverence to their ruler as to the divine majesty itself.'[5] Grégoire's fellow countryman Loys Le Caron (Charondas) was another lawyer who advocated absolute, even miraculous monarchy as well as witch hunting; God commanded that witches be exterminated, he said, and the Roman Emperors, the church councils, and the kings of France agreed.[6]

Theodor (i.e. Dietrich) Reinking, who was a professor at Giessen and counsellor to Duke Ludovic the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt, published a guide to witchcraft trials in 1630, but was also the author of two expositions of theocratic absolutism.' The demonological traditionalism of Benedict Carpzov's criminal law studies was presumably consonant with his definition of *majestas* as having the three essential traits of absolutism : *summa potestas, potestas perpetua,* and *potestas legibus soluta.* They appear together, at least, in his *Practicae novae?* Amongst the dissertations for which the jurist Erich Mauritius was *praeses* is one from his years at Tübingen supporting witch trials and one from his years at Kiel supporting princely

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about Witchcraft', 32-55. According to Peter Laslctt (ed.), *Patriarcha and Other Political Works of Sir Robert Filmer* (Oxford, 1949), 9, there is 'ample evidence that up to this time Sir Robert Filmcr had believed... that the executing of witches was theologically justified*. The evidence takes the form of a MS treatise entitled *Theologie: or divinity,* in which Filmer dealt with witchcraft under the first Commandment and wrote: 'Witches arc to be convicted either by their owne witnesse, voluntary, or extorted by the rack: or by the witnesse of others yt can prove theirc league with sathan: or Supematurall operations. They shall be punished with death: not for their hurte, but for theire League' (quoted Bostridge, p. 51).

[4] Clark, 'KingJames's *Daemonologie',* 156-81.

[5] Church, *Constitutional Thought,* 247-8; Grégoire, *De republica,* 131-79 (esp. 143), 251-3, for examples of absolutist theory, and 458-75, for eight chapters on magic and witchcraft.

[4] Lc Caron, *Tranquillite d'esprit,* 163-4,167; cf. id.. *Responses de droit franfais,*445-50 ('Si les sorciers et sorcières sont dignes du dernier supplice'); on the absolutist and charismatic elements in Le Caron's views on kingship, see Church, *Constitutional Thought,* 195—201; Skinner, *Foundations,* ii. 264. Compare also the demonology in Daniel Drovin's *Vengeances divines* with the patriarchal absolutism of his *Le Miroir des rebelles, traictant de I'excellence de la majeste royale et de la punition de ceux quise sont eslevez contre icelie* (Tours, 1592); or the absolutism of Pierre de L'Hommeau's *Maximes generates du droictfranfois* (Church, *Constitutional Thought,* 318, calls him 'one of the most absolutist^ jurists of the period'), with his involvementis a judge in witch trials inSaumurin 1593, as described by Xavier Martin 'Aspects de la sorcellene cn Anjou, 1570-1640*, in Jean de Viguerie (ed.), *Hutoire des faits de la sorcellene* (Angers, 1985), 75-6.

' [Theodor (i.e. Dietrich) Reinking], *Responsum juris, in ardua cl grays quadam causa concemente processumquendam,contrasagam,nullitcrinstitutum,etindeexortamdiffamaMnemOAa^>ss^,\(>i^)^ya^*

argues, however, that confessions relating to the sabbat could result from demomc delusions and thatevtdence for guilt ought to be treated cautiously; id., 7rarra/ur</r rrgwninereru/anrr«r/«m;l(co,see esp. 3-4;

id., f *iblische Policey*, pt. 2, 1–2.

Carpzov, *Practicae novae*, pt h 249-51 (sovereignty and majesty), 308-45 (witchcraft and magic).

power.[9] In later seventeenth-century England, Joseph Glanvill's attempt to turn the debate on witchcraft to the advantage of the Anglican establishment was consistent with a royalism that saw Charles I as a martyr and any resistance to the providential authority of kings as contrary to religion and destructive of God’s order. In 1667, on the anniversary of the regicide (and to the text of Romans 13: 2. ‘And they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation’), he preached that kings wore ‘Gods Image and Authority’, and that they were neither ‘Substitutes’ for, nor ‘Creatures’ of the public will, the people having no power to govern themselves and, consequently, none to devolve on anybody else.[10]

* * *

The case that demands detailed attention, however, is that of Jean Bodin himself. In 1576 he published a book that made a decisive impact not only on political theory in France but on discussions of the idea of sovereignty wherever they were later attempted. And in 1580 he published another book whose currency among those interested in witchcraft matters made it the *Malleus malejicarum* of the next hundred years. To assume a necessary coherence between *Les Six Livres de la république* and *De la détnonomanie des sorciers* would be to risk a form of interpretative mythology.[11] But that they were quite unrelated seems just as implausible. My suggestion has been that the theory and practice of witch prosecutions raised political issues, while certain traditions of statecraft (again, both theoretical and practical) raised demonological ones. Between the magistracy idealized by writers on witchcraft and the mystical authority claimed by absolutists there was a natural affinity; and between divine right and demonic right an understandable enmity. If this argument has any merit it implies that, in intellectual terms, the Bodin who urged the judicial destruction of witches was on common ground with the Bodin who reformulated the first principles of absolute sovereignty. It also implies that the practice of reading the *République* and the *Démonomanie* largely in isolation from one another is actually a misreading—the

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’ Erich Mauritius, *praises* (Nicolaus Prikius, *respondent), De potestate principis, lege regia, et jurisdiclione,* and Mauritius, *praeses* (Daurcr, *respondent), Dissertatio inaugurate, de denuntiatione sagarum,* in Mauritius, *Dissertationes et opuscula de selectisjurispublici,* cd. Johann Nicolaus Hcrtius (Frankfurt/Main, 1692), 532-55, 1035-138, followed by an appendix containing Mauritius’s opinion in a witchcraft case. See also Valentin Alberti, whose *Compendium juris naturae orthodoxae theologiae eonformatum* (Leipzig, 1678) was listed by Otto von Gierke among works of‘theocratic’ political theory, and who was *praeses*, with Christian Stridtbeckh *respondent,* in *Dissertatio academica, desagis.* Two German scholars whose doubts concerning witchcraft prosecutions might be usefully linked to their political theory are Althusius and Thomasius. For Althusius’s ‘Admonitio ad iudicem’ concerning witchcraft, see Godelmann, *Tractatut*, bk. l.sigs. R2’-S1*.

[10] [Joseph Glanvill], *A loyal tear dropt on the vault of our late martyred sovereign. In an anniversary sermon on the day of his murther* (London, 1667), 6-7, and *passim* for divine-right theory; the sermon was printed anonymously, however, and without Glanvill’s permission. Cf. his remark that the influence of government depended ‘much upon the reverence its Rulers have from the people’; [id.], *A blow at modem saddučism,* 147. For Richard Baxter’s reappraisal of ‘Christian empire’ and his view that kings were ‘obliged to be sacred persons in exercise’ and were ‘as sacred persons as priests’, sec Lamont, *Richard Baxter,* 63-4.

[11] Quentin Skinner, ‘Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas’, *Hist. Theory,* 8 (1969) 16-22. ’

product of a failure to acknowledge the ethical and religious dimensions of the former work and the political dimensions of the latter.[12]

This is what we find.[13] The *Republique* has been seen as having broadly secular implications for the conduct of politics but only once its concrete proposals are detached from Bodin's general cosmology. Its most central claim of all—that sovereignty in a commonwealth consisted in the absolute and undivided power to command its laws—is regarded as a piece of legal positivism. As in the formulation by Hobbes, it seems to stand on its own as a logical truth, irrespective of any moral underpinning and independent of any doctrine of ends. It follows that the qualifications that appear in Bodin's argument when he does allow for the overriding moral criteria of natural and divine law can be explained away as the contradictions of a less than satisfactory thinker, or the hesitations of a man who is on his way towards the full Hobbesian doctrine. It is noticeable that those who have talked of Bodin's crucial contribution to French absolutist theory have insisted that it was his followers who (in W. F. Church's words) 'gave his theory of sovereignty a basis in divine authorization'.[14] His method of argument too is regarded in rather modernistic terms as a relatively novel exercise in secular, empirical reasoning. Bodin's habit of dichotomizing his material has suggested the innovatory, nominalist spirit of Ramus. And the fact that the *Republique* is dense with the analysis of historical case studies has encouraged the view that Bodin's substantive doctrines rested on a comparative and even inductive 'science of politics'.[15]

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[12] **For some important exceptions, see Maxime Prcaud, "'La Démonomanie", fille de la "République" ', in [Bodin], *Jean Bodin: Actes du Colloque Interdisciplinaire d'Angers, 24-27 May, 1984* (2 vols.; Angers, 1985), ii. 419-25; P. L. Rose, 'Bodin's Universe and its Paradoxes: Some Problems in the Intellectual Biography of Jean Bodin', in Kouri and Scott (eds.), *Politics and Society in Reformation Europe,* 266-88; and André Pctitat, 'Un système de preuve empirico-métaphysique: Jean Bodin et la sorcellerie démoniaque' and id., 'L'Écartèlement: Jean Bodin, les sorcières et la rationalisation du surnaturel', *Revue européenne des sciences sociales,* 30 (1992), 39-78, 79-101. Rose, in particular, argues for 'taking Bodin whole* on the basis that all his ideas were religious in character, and says that 'the *Démonomanie* forms an integral part of Bodin's mental universe* (pp. 266-9). He concentrates, nevertheless, on the links between the *Démonomanie* and the *Heptaplomeres.* An older attempt to integrate the *Demonomanie,* with a useful summary of its themes, is Pierre Mesnard, 'La Démonomanie de Jean Bodin', in *L'Opera e ilpensiero di Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, nella storia dell'umanesimo,* Convegno Intemazionale, Mirandola, 15—18 Sept. 1963 (2 vols.; Florence, 1965), ii. 333-56. The proposal is also made by Monter, 'Inflation and Witchcraft', in Rabb and Seigel (eds.), *Action and* Conwr/wn, 371-89, who says (374), 'Not only are Bodin's works on witchcraft, religion, and physics consistent with the *Republique,* but they are also consistent with each other' (Monter concentrates on the relationship between the Afowwomame and the *Response d M. de Malestroit);* by Baxter, 'Jean Bodin's *De la démonomanie des sorcier?,* in Anglo (ed.), *Damned Art,* 88-9; and by Muchembled, *Rdiet la sorciere,* 48-51.**

[13] **In what follows I owe much to these reassessments of the *Republique* as a work of religious and moral philosophy as well as a treatise on political sovereignty: Greenleaf, *Order, Empiricism and Politics,* 125-35; J. U. Lewis, 'Jean Bodin's "Logic of Sovereignty"', *Political Stud.* 16 (1968), 206-22; W. H. Greenleaf, 'Bodin and the Idea of Order', in Horst Denzer (ed.), *Jean Bodin,* Proceedings of the Internauond Conference on Bodin in Munich (Munich, 1973), 23-38; Keohane^r/a^ nd the State, 67-82; David Parker, 'Law, Society and the State in the Thought of Jean Bodin', *Hist. Political Thought, 2* (1981), 253-85; Rose, 'Bodin's Universe and its Paradoxes', 275-8.**

[14] **Church, *Constitutional Thought,* 250-1. Cf. id., *Richelieu* 29; Skinner *FoundaUomu* 30 1.**

[15] **Kenneth D. McRae, 'Ramist Tendencies in the Thought of Jean Bodin' *J. Hist. Ideas,* 16 (1955), 306-23; Skinner, *Foundation,* ii. 290-2. Cf. Kenneth D. McRae, 'Bodin's Sense of Nationality, in**

The difficulties with this view have been traced both to its partiality with regard to Bodin's full argument and its anxiety to recruit him for a more familiar political tradition than the one to which he in fact belonged—interpretative stances with which readers of this book will be forgiven for feeling, by now, somewhat over-familiar. Neither Bodin's definition of sovereign power nor its favoured *locus* in the monarchical state stood on their own as the positive terms of a legal-political science. They were derived analogically as the best earthly reflections of a divine order resting on the absolute unitary will of God. In a typical passage Bodin wrote:

> For as the great soveraigne God, cannot make another God equall unto himselfe, considering that he is *of* infinit power and greatnes, and that there cannot bee two infinit things, as is by naturall demonstrations manifest: so also may wee say, that the prince whom we have set down as the image of God, cannot make a subject equall unto himselfe, but that his owne soveraigntie must thereby be abased.[16]

Like many of his contemporaries, but radically unlike Hobbes, Bodin thought of the human, the natural, and the celestial as mutually reinforcing variants of a single divine dispensation whose principles were those of continuity, hierarchy, and plenitude. W. H. Greenleaf has called this 'the presupposition of all Bodin's thought and so the basis of his political and moral ideas'.[17] We shall see later that he modelled the ordering qualities of just political authority on a concept of the universe as an organic unity regulated by laws of harmonic proportion. Since Christianity, Platonism, and Judaism all contributed to this view, it seems particularly obtuse to think of it as secular.[18]

It followed that Bodin was able to claim divine authorization for absolute royal sovereignty with as much force as any divine-right theorist. He repeatedly invoked *a Deo* images of rulership, as at the outset of the important tenth chapter of book I:

> Seeing that nothing upon earth is greater or higher, next unto God, than the majestie of kings and soveraigne princes; for that they are in a sort created his lieutenants for the welfare of other men: it is meet diligently to consider of their majesty and power, as also who and of what sort they be; that so we may in all obedience respect and reverence their majestie, and not to thinke or speake of them otherwise than of the lieutenants of the most mightie and immortal God: for that he which speaketh evill of his prince unto whome he oweth all dutie, doth injurie unto the majestie of God himselfe, whose lively image he is upon earth.”

Nor was it a contradiction on Bodin's part to qualify absolute power by placing

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[Bodin], *Jean Bodin: Actes du Colloque... d'Angers,* i. 155, for the view that Bodin's theory of sovereignty 'taken in the strict sense, is analytical, clinical, politically neutral, practically value-free'.

[16] Bodin, Six *Bookes,* 155.

[17] Greenleaf, 'Bodin and the Idea of Order', in Denzer (ed.), *Jean Bodin,* 35

[18] These elements in Bodin's thought are the subject of P. L. Rose, *Bodin and the Great God of Nature: The Moral and Religious Universe of a Judaiser* (Geneva, 1980), and emphasized by Baxter 'Jean Bodin's *De la demonomanie des sorciers,* in Anglo (cd.), *Damned Art, passim.* But cf. Maryanne Cline Horowitz, 'La Religion de Bodin reconsideree: Le Marrane comme module de la tolerance' in [Bodin], *Jean Bodin: Actes du Colloque... d'Angers,* i. 201–13. Bodin's hostility to Neoplatonism is indicated by Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic,* 171-7.

[19] Bodin, *Six Bookes,* 153.

restraints on its use; each of them was derived from the moral imperatives which he believed to be constitutive of sovereignty and its ends. They were, in effect, presupposed by any authentic exercise of it. At the very outset of the *République* he was careful to insist on a normative definition of the lawful or rightful government of the commonwealth, and to argue that 'the most blessed and happy life' of every particular citizen, and, therefore, of society in general, lay in referring 'the sweet knowledge of things naturall, humane, and divine ... unto the almightie God, and great Prince of nature'.[20] Later, he again defined law, and therefore justice, as the 'right command of him, or them, which have sovereign power above others'. What distinguished a lawful king (a 'royall monarch') from a mere lord or an outright tyrant was precisely his conformity to divine and natural laws. Without this he simply could not be considered 'the living and breathing image' of God or the agent of human felicity.[21] This, however, was not to obligate him to anything more than the criteria that made him what he was; as J. U. Lewis remarks, 'the limitations [Bodin] places upon sovereignty are neither external nor non-essential, but serve intrinsically to complete it.'[22] In this respect, Bodin was giving magisterial expression to the ethical assumptions that informed most conceptions of absolutism in early modern Europe. What he was not doing was anticipating Hobbes.

As an attempt to capture the other-worldly premisses of political life, Bodin's methodology is also belied by its empirical exterior and Ramist framework. Despite the very considerable historical and even naturalistic analysis in the *République,* his reasoning depended not on building axioms from particulars but on deriving them from principles of universal order by analogy and correspondence. In the Bodinian logic, priority was given to cosmology', not history. On the one hand, Bodin accepted that the human and natural worlds were, at appropriate points in the hierarchy of creation, only reflections of the highest truths of divine order; meaning 'descended' through the planes of being, encompassing politics on the way. On the other hand, civil society offered men the opportunity of satisfying a hierarchy of needs, beginning in brute nature and ending with the contemplation of God; intelligibility 'ascended' through the same planes, making of politics a kind of Neoplatonist, and hence highly moral, experience. It may well be that Ramist procedures of division and subdivision helped Bodin to give order to individual discussions within this schema. But they were, in principle, unable to control all its hierarchical and teleological tendencies. In any case, another of Bodin's cosmological principles was that 'the preservation of the whole world next unto God dependeth of the contrarietie, which is in the whole and every part thereof.[23] A taste for dichotomizing could, therefore, have stemmed as much from the idea that politics was imbued with relationships of opposition that had their own power to stamp order on the discourse of political theorists.

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[20] Ibid. 4-5. [21] Ibid. 156,204-10 ('Of a Royall Monarchic'), 109.

[22] Lewis, 'Jean Bodin's "Logic of Sovereignty"', 214 and *passim* The point is also forcibly made by Keohanc, Philosophy and the State, 71-3; Parker, 'Law, Society and the State', 270-6; Greenleaf, *Order and Empiricism.* 132-1; Daly, *Cosmic Harmony.* 30.

[22] Bodin, *Six Bookes.* 496.

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In a reading reasonably free of hindsight and paying due regard to the whole text, the *Réptibliqiie* does, therefore, emerge as a thoroughly religious work—built, as P. L. Rose has said, on a central vision of *vera religio* and capable (in principle) of absorbing the political implications of demonology and witchcraft.[24] But can these implications be derived from a parallel reading of the *Dénionomanie?* Long accepted as one of the most emphatic, not to say ruthless, contributions to the genre, its consonance with a view of the state has only recently begun to be discussed—as if some sort of intellectual repugnance insulated the mentality of the believer in witchcraft from the lofty speculations of the political philosopher. This sense of tension is encapsulated in a question that has often been asked of the *Dénionomanie'.* how could *Bodin* have written it? One expects such writing (so it is said) from a Boguet or a Rémy but not from a man whose range of intellectual interests and stature as a thinker have earned him the reputation of the Montesquieu of the sixteenth century. How *could* he have reconciled his humanism with his inhumanity? Even Lucien Febvre thought that his was the limiting case of a more general historical paradox.[25]

But to ask such questions is rather obviously to beg others. There is only a paradox at all as long as we continue to neglect the idea of politics in Bodin's demonological thought. Yet it is clear from the dedication alone (to Christophe de Thou, *premier président* of the Paris *parlement*[1]") that the *Dénionomanie* is a work which addresses ideals of justice and magistracy. Like many other demonologies it ends with a hymn to the magistrate class which necessarily presupposes concepts of the rulership needed to create a just and godly society. Along with fellow experts on the subject, Bodin thought in terms of an altogether heightened enmity between witches and magistrates. Of course, witches committed ordinary crimes—crimes against the positive laws of men—like other miscreants. These were simple murder (especially

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[24] Rose, 'Bodin's Universe and its Paradoxes', 282; cf. Germain Marc'Hadour, 'Thomas More et son lie chez Jean Bodin', in [Bodin], Jean *Bodin: Ades du Collogue... d'Angers,* ii. 481.

[21] Febvre, 'Witchcraft: Nonsense or a Mental Revolution?', in Burke (ed.), *New Kind of History,* 189-90; cf. Anglo, 'Melancholia and Witchcraft', 213-14. For the usual reaction, see Trevor-Roper, *European Witch-Craze,* 47; Robert Muchembled, 'Satan ou les hommes?', 15-16; Easlea, *Witch Hunting, Magic and the New Philosophy,* 15; Jean Foyer, 'Introduction au Colloque', in [Bodin], Jean *Bodin: Ades du Collogue... d'Angers,* i. 26. Further examples given by Monter, 'Inflation and Witchcraft', in Rabb and Seigel (eds.), *Action and Conviction,* 371-6; I follow Monter's opinion that: 'The paradox of two or more Bodins—political scientist and witch-hunter, ... a Bodin of dazzling inconsistenciesis a paradox created by us and not by him' (p. 375).

“ Alfred Soman has kindly reminded me that de Thou was almost the last person to the extreme arguments and recommendations of the *Demonomanie,* and that, in terms career, it was a colossal blunder to dedicate the book to of foolhardiness and lack considerations is a infanticide), cannibalism, killing by poison or charms, the slaughter of animals, the causing of famine and sterility by blighting crops, and (somewhat oddly) copulation with the devil. But they also broke natural and divine laws in a flagrant, comprehensive, and ultimately unique manner. Even the most superstitious religions, said Bodin, attempted to keep their clients within natural law by teaching obedience to parents and rulers—hence the punishment of witchcraft in natural (that is, pagan) societies.[27] As for divine law, there were nine separate offences against God in the demonic pact alone; this exceeded anything in the idolatry depicted in the Old Testament.[28] It was because of this utter heinousness to God, and not merely as a consequence of problems of evidence, that Bodin thought of witchcraft as a *crimen exceptum,* exonerating extraordinary legal processes in the courts. For him, it was the moral code of the Old Testament that justified extreme judicial rigour in sixteenth-century France.

This could not have been true unless the magistracy envisaged in the *Demonomanie* was the same as that depicted in the *Republique*—an authority absolute over men because it embodied divine norms of indivisibility and voluntarism. In the former work, as in the latter, Bodin insisted that the prince had no authority to command actions contrary to God's law; thus he could neither order a subject to commit witchcraft nor pardon one already convicted of the crime.[29] In the former work, as in the latter, he tied the survival of civil society to the proper judicial distribution of rewards and punishments; without it there was 'nothing to be hoped for than the inevitable ruin of Commonwealths'. 'Justice therefore', he had written in the *Republique,* 'I say to be *The right division ofrewards and punishments, and ofthat which ofright unto every' man belongeth* its true administration in conformity to harmonic principles was the foundation of right government.[30] In the *Demonomanie* the rationale of punishment is set out in seven heads, each, significantly, supported with a text from the Pentateuch. Its first and principal purpose is to appease divine anger (Numbers 25); thereafter it serves to obtain God's blessing on a land (Deuteronomy 13), to deter other malefactors (Deuteronomy 13), to prevent the 'infection' of the good (Deuteronomy 15,19), to diminish the number of the evil (Leviticus 12,14), to ensure security for the good (Deuteronomy 19), and to punish the actual crime (Deuteronomy 19).[31] There was nothing remote about these judicial ideals. Bodin thought that their neglect had brought France to the verge of dissolution and that only their espousal by the French judiciary would restore an order which had been fundamentally compromised. In this respect, the *Demonomanie* and the *Republique* were clearly part of one campaign and inspired by the same reading of the Old Testament.[32]

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[27] *Bodin, Dentonomanie, fos.* 198'-9', 79, sec also fo. 69.

2i Ibid fos 196'-8'

[29] Bodin, *Demonomanie,* fos. 215,216'; cf. id., *Six Bookes,* 1M.

« Bodin, *Demonomanie,* fo. 194'; cf. id., *Six Bookes,* 155 (author's emphasis).

[31] Bodin, *monomanie,* fos. 19

" Onthe Sluence of iheOldT^nent, esp. the Pentateuch, on both works, and Bodin's application of'the Hebraic political system'to French conditions, see Christopher Baxter, 'Jean Bodin's Daemon and his Conversion to Judaism', in Denzer (ed.),>„ *Bod.n,* 1-21; cf. rd., Jean Bodm s *De la ddmonomame dee sorciers,* 82-3.

Nor should we think of any discontinuity in the kinds of magistrate to whom Bodin addressed the two works. Despite its preoccupation with authority at the centre of commonwealths, the *République* speaks in ‘descending’ terms of the sovereign communicating to lesser magistrates ‘the authoritie, force, and power to commaund’, and of their persons as being also ‘inviolable, and as the auntient Latins say, *Sacrosanctus,* or most holy’. Rulers of whatever status were ‘to be alwaies religeously respected ... as them unto whome God hath given his power’.[33] Similarly, the *Démonomanie* traces the enervating laxity towards witches ‘upwards’ through the judicial system to its apex, the French King. Bodin argued that it was Charles IX who had been most culpable, and contrasted his upsetting of the balance of rewards and punishments with the moral responsibility shown by St Louis.[34] In effect, then, his appeal was in both contexts to the monarchy—indeed, to the monarchy of Henri III—and in both contexts to the magistracy of which it was the ‘exemplary centre’.

Given these Mosaic ideals we could almost predict that Bodin would want to locate the political bona fides of the witch-prosecuting magistrate in his inviolability to witchcraft. In chapter 4 of book 3 of the *Démonomanie* he claimed, like so many other writers on the subject, that the most powerful magic in the world would not work against the officials of the law. Witches had often deposed that, no matter what *maleficium* they worked, it was impossible to kill judges. In a case over which he had helped to preside, Jeanne Hervillier had confessed that ‘from the time she was in the hands of Justice, the Devil had no more power over her, either to free her from prison, or to save her life’. And the *lieutenant* of the *prévôté* of Laon had told him of another witch who had escaped from her irons but could not flee from justice itself. ‘It is a wonderful secret of God’s,’ commented Bodin, ‘and one which judges ought to ponder well, that God keeps them under his protection both against earthly powers and against the power of evil spirits. This is why we read in the law of God “when ye judge fear no one, for the judgement is God’s”.’[35]

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In any demonological context this would have been as much a statement about politics as about witchcraft. Just as the successful protection of a whole society from demonism was a direct expression of the divinity of its ruler (who secured a communal benefit by being different in kind from other men), so a nation in which witchcraft flourished was not merely badly governed in an administrative sense but lacked the essential attributes of sovereignty. But for Bodin the extent of witchcraft in a commonwealth was a political barometer of unique sensitivity. It is not just that the *République* offered a profoundly ethical account of authority or that the *Démonomanie* presupposed it. More than that, in each context, Bodin was drawing out the implications of a single philosophy—a 'philosophy of order'.[36] The key to this is a passage on the theme of *concordia discors* which appears in both works in virtually identical form; here is the version in the *Démonomanie*:

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[33] Bodin, *Six Bookes,* 309,339—10.

[34] Bodin, *Demonomanie,* fos. 122', 167 (citing Bartholemy Faye, *président des requetes*)

[35] Bodin, *Demonomanie,* fos. 139-H (quotations at 140’, 141’). On the first point Bodin is ambizuous- ‘lcs sorcieres ne peuvent nuirc aucunement aux officiers de Justice, fussent ils les plus meschans du monde’. Here the wickedness of judicial officials is at issue; usually it is the strength of the sorce that the material point. The biblical reference is to Deuteronomy 1:17.

> We see that this great God of nature has joined all things through intermediaries that accord with the extremes and make up the harmony of the intelligible, celestial, and elementary world by indissoluble means and bonds. And just as harmony would be destroyed if contrary voices were not joined together by intermediate voices, so it is with the world and its parts. In the heavens contrary signs are united by a sign that agrees with both the one and the other. Between stones and the earth we find clay and balm. Between the earth and metals there are the marcasites and other minerals, and between the stones and the plants various types of coral, which are lapideous plants that produce roots, branches, and fruit. Between the plants and the animals are the zoophytes or plantbeasts, which have feeling and motion, and take life from roots that are attached to stones. Between the terrestrial and aquatic animals are the amphibians, such as beavers, otters, tortoises, and river-crabs. Between the aquatic animals and the birds are flying fish. Between the other animals and humans are the apes and monkeys, and between all the brute beasts and the intelligible natures (which are the angels and demons) God has placed man, who is part mortal, through the body, and part immortal, through the intellect.[37]

What is important about this statement is not its familiarity as orthodox 'chain of being' theory but its pivotal location in the two texts and the fact that it draws them together at the deepest level.[38] In the *Démonomanie* it is placed very early, for here Bodin works from the first principles of the subject. The intellectual departure point for demonology (it was the departure point of this book too) was necessarily some form of anti-Manichaeism. Witchcraft was impossible without evil spirits and evil spirits were unthinkable except as vehicles (ultimately) of the good. With an acknowledgement of the existence of good as well as bad 'daemons', Bodin turns to orthodox Aristotelian-Augustinian privation as the key to the problem of evil. The devil is certainly God's contrary, and as necessary for the corruption of the elemental world as God is for its creation, generation, and preservation. But there can be no real dualism; 'all the arguments of the Manichaeans are cut off at the root if it is recognized that there is nothing in this world that is not good ... And that nothing happens that is not good either in itself, or in relation to something else'.[39] However appalling the behaviour of devils, they serve God's design—like the sewers and cesspools which are necessary in even the most elegant palace. Bodin is already moving towards the principle of *concordia discors*. But what completes the design (and makes witchcraft a possible moral choice) is the interposition between angels and devils of man's intellectual soul—just as, throughout nature, it is impossible to accommodate extremes in a harmonious unity without a mean. Bodin's complete schema for this primal sector of the world order and its lines of communication might be represented like this:

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[36] The phrase is from Greenleaf, *Order, Empiricism and Politics*, 127; cf. Keohane, *Philosophy and the State* 68.

[37] Bodin, *Demonomanie*, fos. 7-7'; the version in the *Six Bookes* is at 792-3.

[38] The statement is another instance of Monter's suggestion that Bodin supplied his readers with cross-references to works of his that 'interlocked'; Monter, Inflation and Witchcraft, 373.

[39] Bodin, *Demonomanie*, fo. 4'. For summaries of Bodin's view of spirits, see R.-Léon Wagner, Le Vocabulaire magique de Jean Bodin dans la *Demonomanie des sorciers*, *Humanisme et Renaissance*, 10(1948), 102-6; Georg Roellenbleck, *Offenbarung, Natur und jüdische Überlieferung bei Jean Bodin: Eine Interpretation des Heptaplomeres* (Gütersloh, 1964), 114-26.

DEVlL*-d(a)emons«-evil mcn<—INTELLECTUAL SOUL-»saints-*angels-*GOD

Man's free will allows for dealings in either moral direction and these involve express or tacit agreements with the relevant spirit intermediaries. Bodin therefore moves on logically to discuss how these are to be known and distinguished, and what differentiates the licit from the illicit in knowledge and art. With one more reminder that throughout nature, 'God has placed ... antipathies towards some things and sympathies towards others, and the harmony of the world is sustained by this contrariety aand friendly rivalry',[40] Bodin's demonology is under way.

In the *République,* the role of *concordia discors* is just as crucially formative but its full statement is reserved for almost the last page. Here, Bodin works *towards* the first principles of politics, as the telos of his own argument and of human sociability in general. In the last magisterial chapter of book 6—in what has rightly been called 'the crowning argument of the work'[41]—he defends a conception of government and justice by the laws of harmonic proportion, laws that operate equally in the natural world, in mathematics, in music, and (ideally) in justice. Essentially, the harmonic principle differs from the arithmetic and geometric (of which it is a synthesis) in that it enables the uniting of extremes,[42] an aim which Bodin had already defended in book 3 when discussing 'the orders and degrees of citisens'. It was 'to be sought for in a Commonwealc, so to place the Citisens or subjects in such apt and comely order, as that the first may be joyned with the last, and they of the middle sort with both; and so all with all, in a most true knot and bond among themselves together with the Commonweale'.[41] Likewise (book 4), the musical application of harmony was to guide monarchs in dealing with the inevitable friction among lesser office-holders of varying degrees:

> And as in instruments, and song it selfc, which altogether out of tunc, or all in the selfc same tunc, the skilfull and learned eare cannot in any sort endure, is yet made a certaine well tuned discord, and agreeing harmonic, of most unlike voices and tunes, viz. of Bases, Trebles, and

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*° Bodin, *Dentonomanie,* fo. 19.

[41] Rose, 'Bodin's Universe and its Paradoxes', 277.

[42] The essential point—which I owe to discussions with Dr Jon Clark—is that a harmonic progression involves relationships between three successive terms, where the value of the middle term can be
in terms of the values of the other two. In arithmetic and geometric progressions, the value of any
depends only on the value of the preceding *or* following term. For a full discussion of Bodin's
subject ofharmonic justice, see Michel Villcy, 'Injustice Harmonique scion Bodin', in
Bodin, 69-86. Cf. D. Marocco Stuardi, 'La Teoria della Giustizia armonica nella
La *Ji Jean Bodin,* Atti del Convegno di 14—15 Nov. 1980
Stamauos 'Beauté morale ct punition dans la

> Meanes, cunningly confused and mixt betwixt both: even so also of the mightie, and of the weake, of the hie, and of the low, and others of the middle degree and sort betwixt both; yea even of the verie discord of the magistrates among themselves ariseth an agreeing welfare of all, the straitest bond of safetie in everie well ordered Commonweale.[44]

In remarks like these, Bodin was not indulging in mere analogies. For him, as for Neoplatonists in general, the laws of mathematics and music were not simply models for political order, they were the foundation of it, as indeed they were for the fabric of all things. They were, in fact, the laws of the creation itself. The *République* ends by praising the ‘Great God of nature’ for ordering the whole world and each of its parts by ‘a perpetuall Harmonicall bond, which uniteth the extreames by indissoluble meanes, taking yet part both of the one and of the other’.[45] This was to be the most fundamental premiss of Bodin’s politics. It required institutional arrangements which would blend the two primary features of ‘arithmetic’ equality and ‘geometric’ similitude in the distribution of justice, the satisfying of interests, and the maintenance of power. What Bodin aimed to show was that ‘the royall estate ... framed unto the harmonicall proportion, if it be royally ordered and governed, that is to say, Harmonically; there is no doubt but that of all other estates it is the fayrest, the happiest, and most perfect’.[46]

Since this single principle of harmonic order—E. H. Kossman calls it a ‘baroque concept of the state’[47]—informs the *Démonomanie* and the *République* alike, we ought to be able to draw more indifferently on these two works than has hitherto been the case. When we do this two fundamental features of Bodin’s thought on witchcraft emerge. One of them returns us to the issue with which this book originally opened; the other may serve as a final illustration of the theme of the ordering powers of magistracy. Firstly, Bodin’s world-view would be quite untenable without demons and those who covenanted with them, since the presence of both was required for its completion. This was not merely a question of the mechanics of retribution. He opened the *Démonomanie* and closed the *République* by acknowledging Christian metaphysical indebtedness to evil, citing the crucial Augustine texts on both occasions. In the body of the *République* he remarked succinctly: ‘the force and nature of virtue is such, as that it cannot be contrarie unto vertue’;[48] and in its final pages he repeatedly emphasized the necessity for vice. Nor was it just that a plenitude of forms was required for harmonic unity to be possible at all; harmony itself was achieved only in relation to discord, which survived in human affairs, as well as in music, as its essential foil. Like so many of his contemporaries Bodin was, in effect, exploring the phenomenon of difference as the basis of morality and justice:

> as there cannot bee good musicke wherein there is not some discord, which must of necessitie be intermingled to give the better grace unto the Harmonie... So also is it necessarie that there should be some fooles amongst wise men, some unworthy of their charge amongst men of great

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[44] Ibid. 498. [41] Ibid. 793. [44] Ibid. 786.

[47] E. H. Kossman, ‘Popular Sovereignty at the Beginning of the Dutch Ancien Regime, *Acta Historiae Neerlandicae*, 14(1981), 6-7.

[41] Bodin, *Six Books*, 494.

> experience, and some evill and vitious men amongst the good and vertuous, to give them the greater lustre, and to make the difference knowne ... betwixt vertue and vice, knowledge and ignorance.[4]'

Bodin added to these examples monsters in nature, eclipses of the heavenly bodies, and surdities in geometrical reasoning. He could have cited demons and witches with just as much validity; but what he does go on to mention amounts to virtually the same thing. As the long and complex exposition of book 6 of the *Republique* reaches its very last stage, it is the case of Pharaoh and his magicians, much beloved throughout the literature we have been surveying, to which Bodin too turns. Here was the quintessential case of an 'enemie of God and Nature' whose role was nevertheless to confirm both (Exodus, 9: 16, 'for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth'). The 'things then done in Egypt'—Bodin's bland reference to a confrontation taken to be decisive for the understanding both of the nature of miracle and magic and the authority to wield them—had shown that even

> the worker and father of all mischiefe, whome the sacred Scriptures declare by the name of *Leviathan* ... to bee still by the becke, word, and power of God, kept in and restrained: and all the force and power of those mischiefes and evils by him and his wrought (... without which the power of the good should neither bee, neither yet be at all perceived) to be shut up within the bounds of this elementarie world.

In addition to all the other meanings this episode was required to yield, it now became a guide to the principles of 'a well ordered Commonweale'.[49] [50] But there is, in any case, a sense in which Bodin *did* go on explicitly to the subject of demons and witches—four years later. The *Demonomanie* was, in effect, a specialist account of the relationship of difference that underlay all the others, and its mood was entirely Pentateuchal and Mosaic. It was, then, a case study in the politics of the *Republique.* Indeed, the placing of the two near-identical statements of *concordia discors* (at the end of one work and the beginning of the other) suggests that it took up the discussion at precisely the point where the *Republique* had left it.

But, given that demonism was a presupposition of Bodin's philosophy, why did he demand the eradication of witches? Here too—and this is the second important application of his harmonic principle—it is the final paragraphs of the *Republique* that provide the key. Bodin's ultimate vision of world order is a panorama of resemblances:

> Wherefore as of Treble and Base voyces is made a most sweet and melodious Harmonie, so also of vices and vertues, of the different qualities of the elements, of the contrarie motions of the

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[49] Bodin, *Six Booties,* 791-2. Cf. id., *Colloquium of the Seven,* 144-9, esp. 148: 'In a state of illustrious men justice, integrity, or virtue would not even be perceived unless wicked men mingled with the good sane with the mad, brave with the cowardly, rich with poor, low with the noble, were contained within the same walls, provided that evils, if evils are anywhere, are weaker than good.'

[50] Bodin, *Six Bookes,* 793. This was the episode to which Bodin was later to allude via Au when discussing the inviolability of magistrates in the *Demonomanie,* fo. 140*.

> celestiall Spheres, and of the Sympathies and Antipathies of things, by indissoluble meanes bound together, is composed the Harmonie of the whole world, and of all the parts thereof: So also a well ordered Commonweale is composed of good and bad, of the rich and of the poore, of wisemen and of fools, of the strong and of the weake, allied by them which are in the meane betwixt both, which so by a wonderfull disagreeing concord, joyne the highest with the lowest, and so all to all, yet so as that the good are still stronger than the bad; so as he the most wise workeman of all others, and governor of the world hath by his eternall law decreed.[51]

The purpose of the *Republique* was to defend the kind of political arrangements most likely to translate this vision into reality—that is, royal monarchy governing with a due mixture of aristocratic and popular elements.[52] Since geometric (or distributive) justice was proper to aristocracies and arithmetic (or commutative) justice proper to democracies, the result would, again, be the much-desired harmonic proportion. Its purpose could not, by definition, be the destruction of either of its constituents, only the regulation of them in an ever more satisfactory synthesis—we might call it a version of the pursuit of coherence. Political order, what Bodin here calls ‘justice’, could neither begin *in tabula rasa* nor achieve permanent resolution. It was always in process, a matter of ordering. At his most idealistic, Bodin talked as though it was the constant attempt to fine-tune a musical instrument, or to compose more and more concordant music.[53] But in practice what he had in mind was the capacity to adjust the rewards and punishments available in a judicial system to take account of any contingencies that might arise. Given that there were always good and bad men in the commonwealth, the aim was to make institutional arrangements for securing a unity of them consonant with the principle that the good should be ‘still stronger than the bad’.

Such is the philosophical magnitude of these arguments that it is inconceivable that Bodin could have expressed them so fully in 1576 only to neglect them in 1580. The *Demonomanie* should, therefore, be read as an essay on the regulative, not the annihilative powers of magistracy. With his ‘intellectual soul’ man was able to move towards either moral extreme but the consequences of his doing so were social as well as private and this particular harmonic balance could not therefore be left to individuals to adjust for themselves. Indeed, an act of witchcraft (as we have seen) had enormous implications for divine law; here the duty of the magistrate to act in accordance with the principles of harmonic justice was paramount.[54] If he failed, God was there to remind him of his dereliction by drawing attention to its consequences; more than once Bodin argues that evil spirits were the ‘executors and executioners’ of divine justice.[55] The trenchant demands of the *Démonomanie* stem essentially from this; Bodin was convinced that negligence had upset the balance of contrary moral principles so badly that France was literally out of tune, discordant, with the bad considerably stronger than the good. Like many of his contemporaries, he sensed an acute crisis in the state and in society but he also diagnosed, in his own terms, a dangerous undermining of universal harmony itself. The *Démonomanie* is, therefore, a punitive book because the need to punish had been seriously neglected. It is an austere book, because the situation demanded the single-mindedness, the 'harsh Hebraism', of the Old Testament.[56] It is a dogmatic book, for only moral absolutism could overcome the appalling disorder of the 1570s and 1580s. But, in intellectual terms—if not in terms of its pragmatism and its impact on Bodin's career—it is only the book one would expect from the author of *Les Six Livres de la republique.*

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[51] Bodin, *Six Bookes* 793–4.

« For the crucial Bodinian distinction between the form of the state (‘estate’) and the form of its government, see Greenleaf, *Order, Empiricism and Politics*, 129-32.

» Keohane, *Philosophy and the State*, 80, describes this as a ‘symphonic vision of a common w«l th .

* Bodin gives a detailed example in the case of priest-witches whose wickedness is heightened by their office and whose punishment should therefore be that much m.tesevere (|par P^rt^dch£ justice monique la peine est plus grande, et le crime aggrave pour la quahte des personnes), *Dimanoman,'*, fos. 210’-! 1.

” Bodin, *Démonomanie,* fo. 6, see also fos. 109, 111-111', 122.

[54] The terms are Judith Shklar's in an untitled review article, *J. Modern Hist.* 47 (1975), 136.

Postscript

THIS has not been a book about the rise and fall of demonology, let alone of 'witch-hunting'. These matters are very far from being unimportant, and, if anything, have dominated discussions hitherto; although, arguably, the incessant raising of questions about them has not yet been matched by the finding of good answers. Nevertheless, I have concentrated instead on how witchcraft (and allied) beliefs made whatever sense they did during their period of maximum appeal to intellectuals. I have chosen, that is, to treat them as given and to look at how they worked while they survived, rather than at how they emerged or declined. Such an approach involves interpreting more than explaining, certainly explaining away; or, at least, it makes explanation morphological, rather than causal. Changes of argument and emphasis occurred within demonology between the middle of the fifteenth century and the early decades of the eighteenth century, although to a lesser extent than one might imagine. Even so, on this occasion, the linear aspects of this history have been neglected compared to the systemic ones. The aim, above all, has been to treat the belief in witchcraft in terms of its relationships to other beliefs obtaining at a particular moment in time, just as the language in which it was expressed has been treated as one of pure values. The historical moment extends, one might say fictionally, over decades and even centuries, but focusing on it is the best way of distinguishing the elements of witchcraft belief in terms of their relational meanings. I have simply cut a particularly thick 'slice' through early modern intellectual life and examined the way it was arranged so as to sustain the belief in witches and similar matters. In terms that were once fashionable but retain their usefulness, this has been a synchronic, not a diachronic, study of demonology.

In any case, it might be argued that before we can account for the appearance or disappearance of a historical phenomenon, we need to have a sure grasp of what that phenomenon was. If we mistake its nature, we go searching for inappropriate beginnings and irrelevant endings. Historians of the 'English Civil War' came to this conclusion some years ago, when they realized that the notorious obscurity of its origins was, in part, the product of its own ambiguities as a historical concept. Learned witchcraft beliefs are in the same category. Much has been surmised about how they developed out of medieval thought and, later, succumbed to various forms of modernism, but few serious attempts have been made to say what they *were.* Yet, finding out what sort of support they received from (and gave to) simultaneously held opinions about other things matters a great deal to any account of their intellectual pedigree. Knowing how they were defended at the height of their popularity is, likewise, indispensable to knowing how they could be effectively attacked or come to lose their credibility. Whether they engrossed European intellectuals or left many untouched or hostile affects our whole view of what it is we are trying to understand. Indeed, the very style and tone of diachronic writing in this area depends ultimately on whether demonology is seen as something with solid roots in central early modern orthodoxies or as a marginal and exotic aberration. Thus, to think synchronically about what witchcraft ideas were like and how they made sense has, after all, important implications for the way their linear history is viewed.

My argument has been that, in believing in witchcraft, writers of demonology took up positions in main areas of contemporary intellectual debate. In natural philosophy, they worked with a flexible amalgam of up-to-date Aristotelianism and natural magical theory; in history, they espoused an apocalyptic and prophetic understanding of the past and the events of their own times; their view of religious deviance derived from a providential interpretation of misfortune, a pastoral and evangelical conception of piety and conformity, and a preoccupation with sins against the first Commandment, notably idolatry; and their politics was built on a mystical and quasi-sacerdotal view of magistracy and on the workings of charismatic rulership. If this argument has any merit, its first implication is that attempting to trace the origins or decline of learned witchcraft beliefs as such is likely to be as intractable a task in the future as it has been in the past. If these intellectual positions were demonology's principal components, then it is *their* fortunes that will need to be considered, not those of some compound called simply 'witchcraft' or 'magic'. Mature and systematic witchcraft theory was possible because these ways of reflecting about science, history, religion, and politics (and, no doubt, ways of reflecting about other things too) were available as intellectual options during the early modern centuries. It seems safe to presume that it only became possible when these options also took hold, and that it ceased to be possible when they too lost their appeal. The challenge, then, is to see whether sufficiently precise conjunctures existed in time between the life-spans of such options and that of learned witchcraft belief itself for us to speak of the first being, in some sense, correlative with the second.

Baldly stated, the chances of this being so seem high. In each case, we are dealing with a way of thinking that had a long prehistory but which appears to have experienced new impetus, vitality, and prominence in later medieval and early modern Europe. This applies as well, although with perhaps less discernible force, to the enabling (and disabling) properties of the linguistic options that were also chosen, notably those relating to contrariety in its various logical and rhetorical forms. These properties were inherent in traditional cosmology, but their appeal to witchcraft theorists can be matched historically, I have suggested, with both an increased general resort to self-consciously rhetorical strategies of this kind and also the experience of unprecedented and apparently unbridgeable ideological—particularly religious-divisions. In the other four areas of intellectual life that I have explored, where it is substantive doctrines rather than kinds of writing that are at issue, it might be possible to hypothesize as follows: the modernizing of Aristotle and the naturalizing of magic became key ingredients in natural philosophy from Oresme onwards; apocalypticism and prophecy were thriving in the fifteenth century but received an enormous boost from subsequent religious conflicts; providentialism, evangelism, and Decalogue theology were at the heart of the 'long' reformation of the church; the new pretensions of absolutist theory meant that politics became mystified to an extent unknown in the Western medieval states. On the other hand, by the early decades of the eighteenth century, these intellectual enthusiasms had either lost their momentum or were about to do so. Natural knowledge was being decisively reconceptualized and its boundaries redrawn, and scholars other than Aristotle had already become its heroes; historical thinking and writing had become much less biblical and presidential in its structures, language, and values; demands for religious change and conformity had slackened and been undermined by inertia and pluralism; politics was now subject to 'rational' analysis and the weighing of rights and powers. Of course, impressionistic depictions such as these hide monumental problems of historical analysis; but they point to possibly fundamental correlations between the history of witchcraft beliefs and other linear trends in European thought.

Moreover, impressions can be strengthened in this case if we consider a second implication of this book's main argument. By taking up the intellectual positions they did, witchcraft authors were, either implicitly or explicitly, declining to take up others—others that, in principle at least, were also available to them during the same period of European history. They were not thinking in terms of the Ciceronian historiographical concepts of the Italian Renaissance and of European humanism in general; they were not supporters of what Troeltsch called 'sect-type' churches or of their spiritualist and antinomian theologies; and they were not prepared to regard political institutions as the products of human artifice, whether expressed in terms of utilitarianism, or pragmatism, or mere expediency. In the case of science, the competition between schools and philosophies was so open and intellectual allegiances so fluid that it is more difficult to discern lines of division; as I have said, if anything, demonology throve on just that—the lack of certainty' in natural philosophical experience. But even here one can say that the possibility of demonic intervention in natural events rested on notions of causation that purists of both the Aristotelian and corpuscularian philosophies would have liked to rule out.

It is not a question here of plotting conscious choices and affiliations, as if individual witchcraft authors searched round for the intellectually most supportive doctrines, discarding others along the way. What I wish to emphasize, instead, is the presence or lack of more general alliances between the doctrines themselves. If demonology was congruent with some, it was incongruent with others, with, again, important consequences for its fortunes and how we report them. Just as it comes to seem natural for some intellectuals to have taken witchcraft seriously—William Perkins, or Martin Del Rio, or Pierre Grégoire, let us say—so it remains almost unthinkable in the cases of others—a Machiavelli, or a Montaigne, or a Henry Stubbe, perhaps. The sense of negative correlations here is just as important as my argument for the existence of positive ones; indeed, the first helps to confirm the second. Demonology's very kinship with various kinds of other beliefs was matched by enmity, or indifference, or, simply, a less weighty construction of witchcraft from their competitors. Important, relevant, and (as Alasdatr MacIntyre might say) rational in one set of contexts, it was likely to be tangenual, irrelevant, or irrational in the contrasting set. Apart from anything else, this means that, potentially at least, witchcraft was a controversial matter throughout the early modern centuries, and not just towards their close. It was always, we might say, a relative concept.

In order to account for the development and decline of demonology we do not, therefore, have to confront European intellectual life as a monolith or choose between seeing witchcraft beliefs as one of its central affirmations and seeing them as its 'dark' side. They belonged—intimately, I have suggested—to some of its ways of thinking, and only indirectly, or not at all, to others. If the belief in witchcraft emerged to some kind of intellectual prominence in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it is probably because the ways of thought with which it was most closely allied were regarded at that time as holding out promising, even progressive, possibilities for the future. They described and accounted for contemporary problems in what seemed an accurate way and presented attractive solutions to them. If, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the belief in witchcraft lost its intellectual appeal it is, likewise, probably because these same allies in the world of thought were also losing theirs. In science, history, religion, and politics, it came to be felt that the future lay with different descriptions and other solutions—indeed, in many cases, with precisely those with which demonology' had never enjoyed close or friendly relations. Having thrived on certain ways of thinking, it therefore faded from thought when others took their place.

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ALSO PUBLISHED BY OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Early Modem European Witchcraft
Centres and Peripheries
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